

Heartwork

SEPTEMBER 2026

THE WARRIOR WITHIN:

*Rooted in Values,
Rising with
Purpose*

*Discover how
character
takes shape in
everyday
moments,
one choice
at a time.*

**BEYOND LESSONS.
BEYOND RULES.
BEYOND THE CLASSROOM.**

*In this issue, read how we
can strive to embody the
University's core values
in building our
Warrior way
of life.*

SEA Games medalists, UAAP Champion, and Five-Time Reigning UAAP MVP in Fencing

SHAWN NICOLLEI S. FELIPE

From the
Editorial Team

THE WARRIOR WITHIN:

*Rooted in Values,
Rising with Purpose*



Ma. Gracia M. Gallardo-Gonzales, RGC
DIRECTOR, GCCSO

Every UE Warrior has a story.

For some, the University of the East is where dreams begin or take shape. For others, it is a place for second chances, building lifelong friendships, unforgettable lessons, and moments that shape who they are today. Whether you are a student discovering your path, a faculty member inspiring young minds, an employee serving with dedication, an alumnus carrying the Warrior spirit wherever life takes you, a parent, or an industry partner walking alongside us, you are an important part of the UE story.

As we celebrate the **80th Foundation Anniversary of the University of the East**, we look back with gratitude at the generations of Warriors who came before us and look forward with hope to those who will continue our legacy. While much has changed throughout the years, one thing has remained constant - the values that define what it truly means to be a UE warrior.

This third issue of Heartwork is inspired by these very values. The ones we see on the walls within the campus and repeatedly mentioned in the student, employee, and faculty handbooks, are more than what they appear to be. They come alive in every kindness we extend to others, the courage to stand for what is right and just, the continuous pursuit of excellence, the respect we show others and ourselves, and the teamwork we foster in our respective spaces. These are the everyday choices we make that shape not only our own lives but the kind of UE community we want to build.

Our theme, **The Warrior Within: Rooted in Values, Rising with Purpose**, is an opportunity to pause and reflect. In a world that often measures success through achievements and recognition, this latest issue of Heartwork reminds us that our greatest strength comes from within us. The very values that guide our decisions, the compassion we show others, and the purpose we choose to live each day.

As you read through the pages, we hope that you see a part of yourself in every story and reflection. May this remind you that being a Warrior is not simply about wearing red and white, cheering during UAAP games, or celebrating the many academic achievements individually or collectively, but about choosing, every single day, to live with integrity, to care for others, to work together, and to become a source of hope and inspiration wherever you are.

Because 80 years, the true legacy of the University of the East can never be found in the buildings, classrooms, or games. It lives and thrives in its people—their achievements, values, and contributions. It is in the heart of every UE Warrior that our values remain deeply rooted and inspire us to live a life of purpose.

Happy 80th Foundation Anniversary, Unibersidad ng Silangan! Here's to celebrating our shared adventure and to creating many more years of inspiration, service, and growth, together as **ONE UE COMMUNITY!**

In this Issue

06 From Classroom Quests to Boardroom Conquests: Why Teamwork is the Ultimate UE Warrior Superpower

Core Value: Teamwork

Author: Dr. Ann Joizelle D. Enverzo, RGC, RPm, LPT

09 Teamwork in Life

Core Value: Teamwork

Author: Rhian Angela A. Encomienda

12 Professionalism Starts with You, Not in the Office

Core Value: Professionalism

Author: Dr. Dianne G. Rodriguez, RGC

16 The Lighthouse to the Ship that Navigates

Core Value: Accountability

Author: Ma. Lihra M. Daza, RGC, RPm

20 The Parable of the Invincible Backpack A short story about Accountability

Core Value: Accountability

Author: Ma. Lihra M. Daza, RGC, RPm

27 Four Pillars of Eco-Friendly Living

Core Value: Environment-friendliness

Author: Maxine B. de Luna-Narito, RGC

30 Character Under Pressure

Core Value: Uprightness of Character

Author: Anne Camille D. Mercado, RPm

34 Forged by the Blade: A Fencer's Journey Beyond the Bout

Core Values: Teamwork, Accountability, Commitment, Social and Moral Responsibility

Author: Mr. Shawn Nicollei S. Felipe

40 Understanding Integrity: Living with Honesty and Wholeness

Core Value: Integrity

Author: Dr. Angelito B. Clavero II, RGC

In this Issue

44 **The Strength to Serve: Discovering the Warrior Within**

Core Value: Service-Orientedness

Author: Araceli D.G. Deang, RGC, RPsy, RPm

48 **Mental Health is a “We” thing**

Core Values: Social & Moral Responsibility

Author: John David D. Albay, LPT, RGC

52 **The Ripples of Our Action**

Core Values: Social & Moral Responsibility

Author: Rhian Angela A. Encomienda

55 **Small Promises, Big Steps**

Core Value: Commitment

Author: Alyza Sien S. Espiritu, RPm

58 **From “I Want To” to “I WILL”**

Core Value: Commitment

Author: Alyza Sien S. Espiritu, RPm

61 **Showing Up for What Matters**

Core Value: Commitment

Author: Alyza Sien S. Espiritu, RPm

66 **Teach You a Lesson: Binge-Worthy Stories, Life-Worthy Lesson**

Core Value: Accountability

Author: Shailey Anne N. Marasigan

69 **Movie Recommendations for Kids and Teens**

Core Values: Integrity, Environment-friendliness, Professionalism, Teamwork, Social and Moral Responsibility

Author: Shailey Anne N. Marasigan

70 **Main Character Growth: Songs for Becoming the Person You’re Meant to Be**

Core Value: Commitment

Author: Shailey Anne N. Marasigan

FROM CLASSROOM QUESTS TO BOARDROOM CONQUESTS: WHY TEAMWORK IS THE ULTIMATE UE WARRIOR SUPERPOWER

Dr. Ann Joizelle D. Envergo, RGC, RPh, LPT

Have you ever tried pulling off a 5-page research paper at 11:59 PM, single-handedly, while relying on lukewarm instant coffee and sheer desperation?

Now, imagine this instead: three fellow UE Red Warriors jump into the shared Google document. One handles data analysis, another crafts a flawless slide deck, and the third proofreads like a hawk-eyed editor. Suddenly, panic melts into victory.

Whether you are wearing the red-and-white jersey on campus or sporting a corporate badge as a "Warrior Employee," one fundamental truth stands out: **nobody wins a battle alone.**

Quick Pulse Check

Be honest: In group projects, which teammate are you?

- **The Strategist:** The person who has the working board set up before the professor even finishes explaining the rubric.
- **The Crammer Creator:** Silent all week, but drops a beautifully crafted presentation two hours before the deadline.
- **The Anchor:** Keeps everyone calm, brings snacks, and resolves group chat drama.

**SPOILER:
A WINNING TEAM NEEDS
A BIT OF ALL THREE!**



At the University of the East, teamwork isn't just a word thrown around during orientation—it is officially codified as one of the core institutional values alongside Excellence, Integrity, Professionalism, Commitment, Transparency, Accountability, and Social Responsibility.

When you go through thesis defenses, organize events, participate in simple class group activities, or compete in university athletics, you learn that individual talent only gets you to the starting line. True success requires team cognition—where you can synchronize your thoughts with your group, adapt on the fly, and trust each other's strengths.

- **Different talents, but a single target or objective.** Just as a basketball team needs point guards, shooters, and rebounders, academic teams thrive when diverse skill sets combine.
- **Shared responsibilities.** Splitting the tasks involved in complex assignments lightens the cognitive load, turning seemingly impossible goals into manageable steps.



The Workplace Battlefield: Being a "Warrior Employee"

Fast-forward a few years: you've marched across the graduation stage, swapped your campus backpack for a briefcase or laptop sleeve, and stepped into the corporate world.

Does the warrior spirit change?

Not at all. It simply levels up.

As a **"Warrior Employee,"** the **"solo genius"** myth is gone. Modern workplaces are dynamic, interdisciplinary ecosystems where organizational success depends directly on effective collaboration.





A true Warrior Employee brings key habits forged at UE straight to the workplace:

- 1. Psychological Safety:** Creating an environment where colleagues feel safe offering bold ideas or raising red flags without fear.
- 2. Accountability:** Delivering your share of the work on time so the rest of the chain doesn't break.
- 3. Constructive Alignment:** Putting shared organizational goals above individual ego.

VICTORY BELONGS TO THE PACK

Lone people might win an occasional sprint, but integrated teams win the marathon. From late-night study sessions near Recto or Caloocan to high-stakes client pitches in major financial districts, the ability to build, support, and lead a team remains your most valuable asset.

So, the next time a group project or cross-departmental initiative comes your way, don't sigh. Step up, rally the team, and charge forward like the Warrior you are!

References:

- Don, Y., & Raman, A. (2020). School management and leadership: Teamwork in schools. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Instruction*, 1(2), 14–25. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340479493_SCHOOL_MANAGEMENT_AND_LEADERSHIP_TEAMWORK_IN_SCHOOLS
- Southern New Hampshire University. (2024, November 26). How organizational psychology improves teamwork at workplace. <https://in.snhu.edu/blogs/transform-team-dynamics-with-an-online-degree-in-organizational-psychology>.
- University of the East. (n.d.). The mission statement, vision statement, and core values. <https://www.ue.edu.ph/mla/the-mission-statement/>
- Winzar, L. (2018, September 1). What makes teams work? *Monitor on Psychology*, 49(8), 26–32. <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2018/09/cover-teams>





Teamwork In Life

Rhian Angela A. Encomienda
JHS Peer Facilitator

When I was younger, I thought teamwork was only for sports or for group projects in school. I thought that one must be independent to be strong; you have to do things on your own so no one could say you owed them anything. But as I got older, I realized: That idea wasn't strength. It was loneliness disguised as pride.

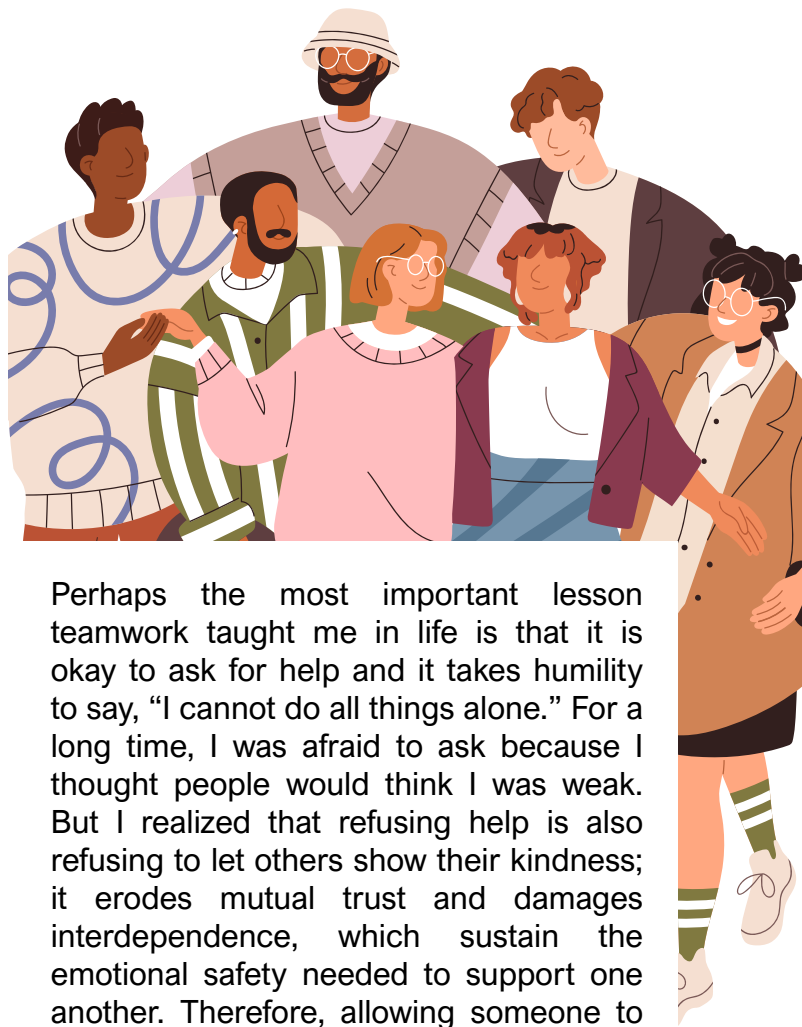
In life, teamwork is not merely an activity. It is how we survive.

My different teams in life

The first time I ever belonged was to my family. I did not choose them, but they were the first to teach me what it means to work together. I saw it in small things. My mother would cook even after a long day at work, and my father would wash the dishes without being told. When my siblings and I had school expenses at the same time, my parents would sit together and plan how to budget. No one kept score. That is when I learned that in a family, teamwork is not about who does more; it is about making sure no one gets left behind. If one of us is tired, the rest adjusts. If one of us fails, the rest doesn't laugh; we help.

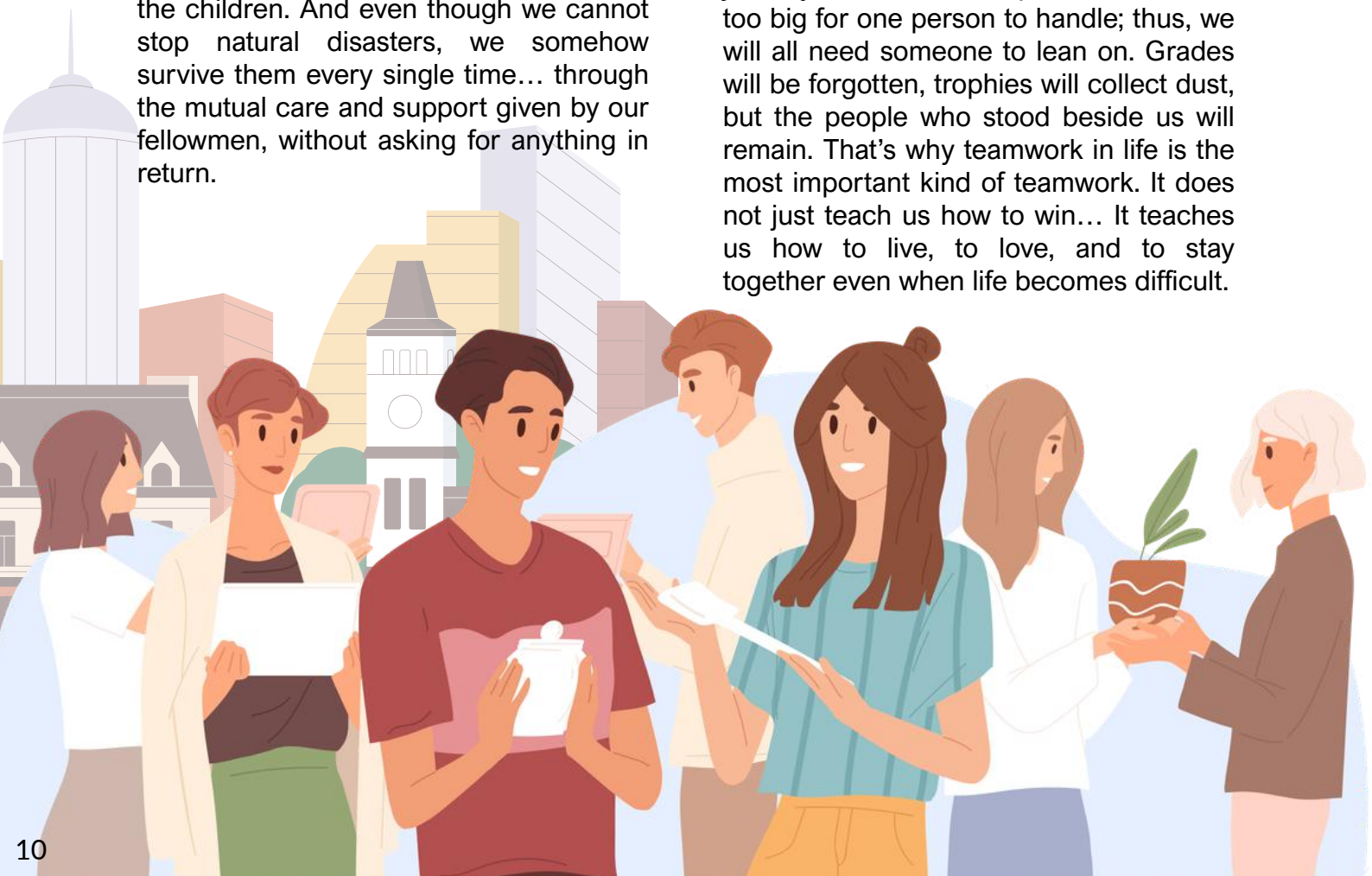
Outside our home, I saw teamwork through friendships. At first, I used to think that friendship required fairness in reciprocity—equal... “fifty-fifty”. However, I learned that the essence of reciprocity lies more in the mutual exchange of care, support, and effort. There were times when I was going through problems, and I could only give twenty percent of myself. My friends gave the remaining eighty percent so we could sustain our friendship. When they were struggling and I had more to give, our friendship taught me to support them in the best way I could. From this friendship, I have learned that teamwork is not about counting what you give, but about being willing to carry more when the other person cannot carry anything at all.

Teamwork in life also appears in our community. As Filipinos, it is alive in our spirit of bayanihan, and we witness it every day in the most ordinary, daily situations: During a flood, no one asks who needs help; everyone just steps up. One neighbor brings food, another helps carry things, and another watches over the children. And even though we cannot stop natural disasters, we somehow survive them every single time... through the mutual care and support given by our fellowmen, without asking for anything in return.



Perhaps the most important lesson teamwork taught me in life is that it is okay to ask for help and it takes humility to say, “I cannot do all things alone.” For a long time, I was afraid to ask because I thought people would think I was weak. But I realized that refusing help is also refusing to let others show their kindness; it erodes mutual trust and damages interdependence, which sustain the emotional safety needed to support one another. Therefore, allowing someone to help also allows teamwork to do its wonders.

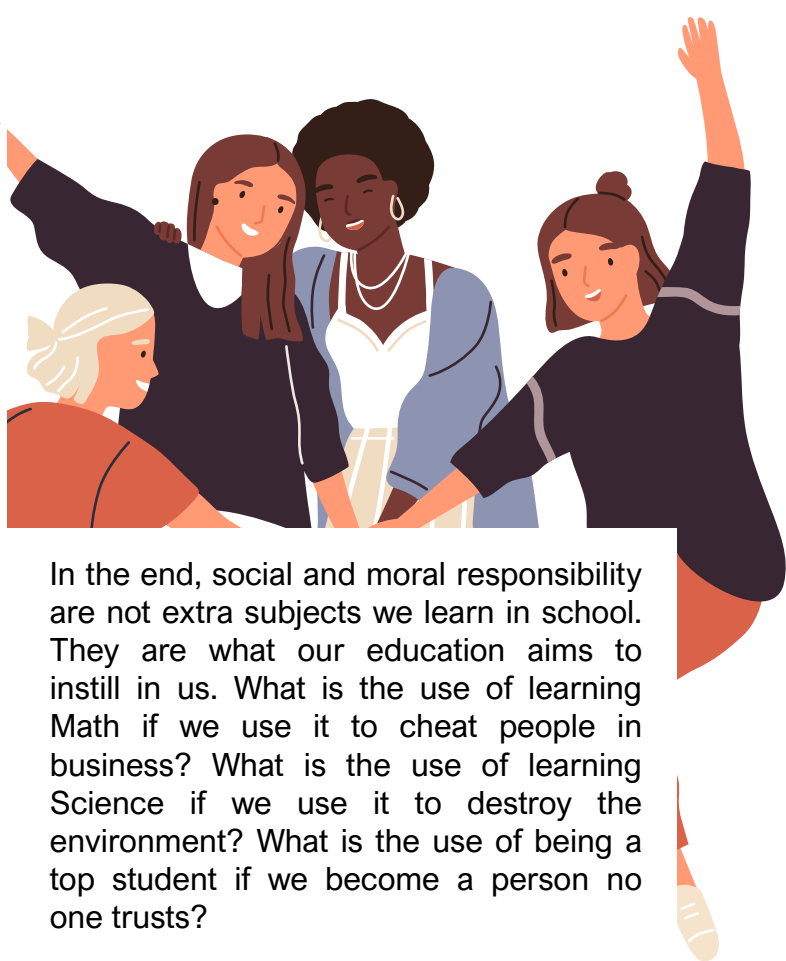
In the end, life will never be a solo journey. We will all face problems that are too big for one person to handle; thus, we will all need someone to lean on. Grades will be forgotten, trophies will collect dust, but the people who stood beside us will remain. That’s why teamwork in life is the most important kind of teamwork. It does not just teach us how to win... It teaches us how to live, to love, and to stay together even when life becomes difficult.



“Why are both needed now more than ever?”

We live in a time where it is easy not to care. We can scroll past suffering. We can mute problems. We can say, “That’s not my business.” But that mindset is what destroys societies. When no one wants to help and instead asks, “Bakit ako?”, we forget that we are part of something bigger and that we have the obligation to protect and take care of all the resources we already have.

When people lose moral responsibility, corruption becomes prevalent, lying becomes normal, and kindness becomes rare. They can appear socially active but without moral grounding. For example, someone can do charity for a camera, posting it on social media just for likes and views, while treating their own family badly. We also start to believe that being smart means being able to fool others. While others come to believe that our country has been doomed by literate people in the government, the bitter truth is that the problem does not lie with literacy, but with our allowing people who are socially active but lack moral grounding to hold power over us.



In the end, social and moral responsibility are not extra subjects we learn in school. They are what our education aims to instill in us. What is the use of learning Math if we use it to cheat people in business? What is the use of learning Science if we use it to destroy the environment? What is the use of being a top student if we become a person no one trusts?

Being a good person is not about being perfect. It is about being aware that every action has repercussions, and that every choice shapes who we are becoming.

Social responsibility says “I am part of this world, so I will make it better.” Moral responsibility says, “I have a conscience, so I will not betray it.”

If we can learn to live by those two sentences, we will not just have a better school or a better community; we will have a better Philippines.



Professionalism Starts with *You*, Not in the Office

Dr. Dianne G. Rodriguez, RGC

When we hear the word “professionalism,” what is the first thing that comes to mind?

A person wearing a black suit with a tie and a matching suitcase?

Vibe check?

Cool, calm, and collected while troubleshooting and finishing the task with a celebratory, expensive coffee that is difficult to pronounce, with specific milk and sugar levels, no foam, no froth?

In reality, professionalism is not about wearing a snappy suit or having a fancy work title in a corporate office.

Professionalism develops long before you set foot in the world of the workforce. It starts with you... in one of your best training grounds: school.

**Grades are NOT
the ultimate
determinant of
success**

While grades do matter as one of the determinants of a student's intellectual competence and academic performance, it is, unfortunately, not the only determinant of success.



Let's say there are two students:

One is brilliant but lazy, submits an interesting but okay job, refuses suggestions, and misses the deadline. The student would blame other members of the group when things get mixed up or there are problems in the group work.

Another student doesn't have the highest grades but communicates with groupmates respectfully, asks questions when there are concerns, accepts mistakes, and submits on time.

Who would you trust with an important project between the two?

Brilliance and intelligence can get people noticed, but a good attitude and behavior would make people want to work with you. I mean, who wants to work with entitled people?

Your First Workplace is Your Classroom

Think of your classroom as a mini version of the real working world. Yes, your professor isn't your boss, but there are some similarities. You're still expected to follow instructions, hit deadlines, show up, communicate clearly, and treat people with respect.

Another is that your classmates aren't your coworkers (yet), but you'll still need to work with them, handle different personalities, split tasks, and yes, you need them to survive those group projects where one person vanishes until the night before the deadline.

Honestly, that experience is more useful than it feels. Group projects teach you something textbooks can't: people are different, and figuring out how to work with all kinds of personalities is a big part of becoming a professional.

Your first networking opportunity is at school too. So be sure to create good working relationships with your professors and classmates who can refer you to work opportunities or write good recommendations for you.



The “Seen” Zone: Keeping It Professional When You Send Messages

One of the easiest ways to act like a pro in college is based on how you communicate.

We live in a time where sending a message takes seconds. But somehow, replying to an important one can feel like a huge decision. You don't have to reply to every message instantly. But you do need to learn how to communicate responsibly.

If you can't meet a deadline, say something.

If you don't get the instructions, ask.

If you're going to be late, tell the right person.

If you messed up, own it.

A simple *“Sorry, I misunderstood the instructions. Can you help me clarify what I need to do?”* is way more professional than pretending you got it and hoping no one notices.



Being Late Isn't a Personality Trait

We know that everyone runs late sometimes. Traffic hits. Alarms fail. Jeepneys, buses, trains, and even our own sense of time can work against us.

But if you're always late, that's a different story.

Showing up on time sends a simple message:

"I respect your time."

Whether it's class, a meeting, group work, an exam, an internship, or a school event, being on time is one of the easiest ways to show you're professional.

And no, *"Ma'am/Sir, five minutes lang po"* doesn't magically make you five minutes early.



You're Allowed to Make Mistakes

Being professional doesn't mean being perfect.

You're still a student. You will make mistakes. You'll misunderstand instructions, forget things, or submit the wrong file and have that mini panic when you realize you uploaded FinalPaper.docx instead of FinalPaper_FINAL.docx.

It happens to everyone.

What matters is what you do next.

A professional response isn't: *"It's not my fault."*

It's: *"I made a mistake. Here's what happened, and here's how I'll fix it."*

Owning up doesn't make you look weak. In most cases, it makes you look more mature.





Respect Everyone, Not Just the People Who Can Help You

One of the biggest signs of professionalism is how you treat people who can't give you anything in return.

Respect your professors, but also your classmates.

Respect administrators, but also security guards, maintenance staff, student assistants, and everyone who keeps the university running.

Say thank you. Say please. Listen when someone's talking. Don't embarrass someone just because you disagree.

Professionalism isn't about being polite only when someone important is watching. It's about treating people with respect even when there's nothing to gain. And I'll tell you this, the working people are the most grateful and helpful people. They are the foundation of every company, so getting on good terms with them will make your university experience more meaningful.

Your Digital Footprint Is Part of Your Professional Identity

Today's students deal with something older generations didn't have to think about as much: your digital identity.

What you post, comment on, share, or engage with online can shape how people see you.

This doesn't mean turning your social media into a corporate LinkedIn profile. You're allowed to have fun, post memes, and be human.

But before you hit post, it helps to ask: *"Would I still be comfortable if my professor, future employer, internship supervisor, or professional colleague saw this?"*

If your answer is a very loud *"Absolutely not!"*, maybe give that post another five minutes of thought.

Remember, the human resources department is also evolving; they are checking your social media posts and looking into your browser history. Keep your digital footprint low-key and positive.

Sometimes, *professionalism* simply looks like showing up on time, doing your part, replying to the message, admitting when you are wrong, and treating people well.

And honestly, if you can master those things while surviving college, you're already off to a pretty good start.

THE LIGHTHOUSE TO THE SHIP THAT NAVIGATES

Ma. Lihra M. Daza, RGC, RPhm

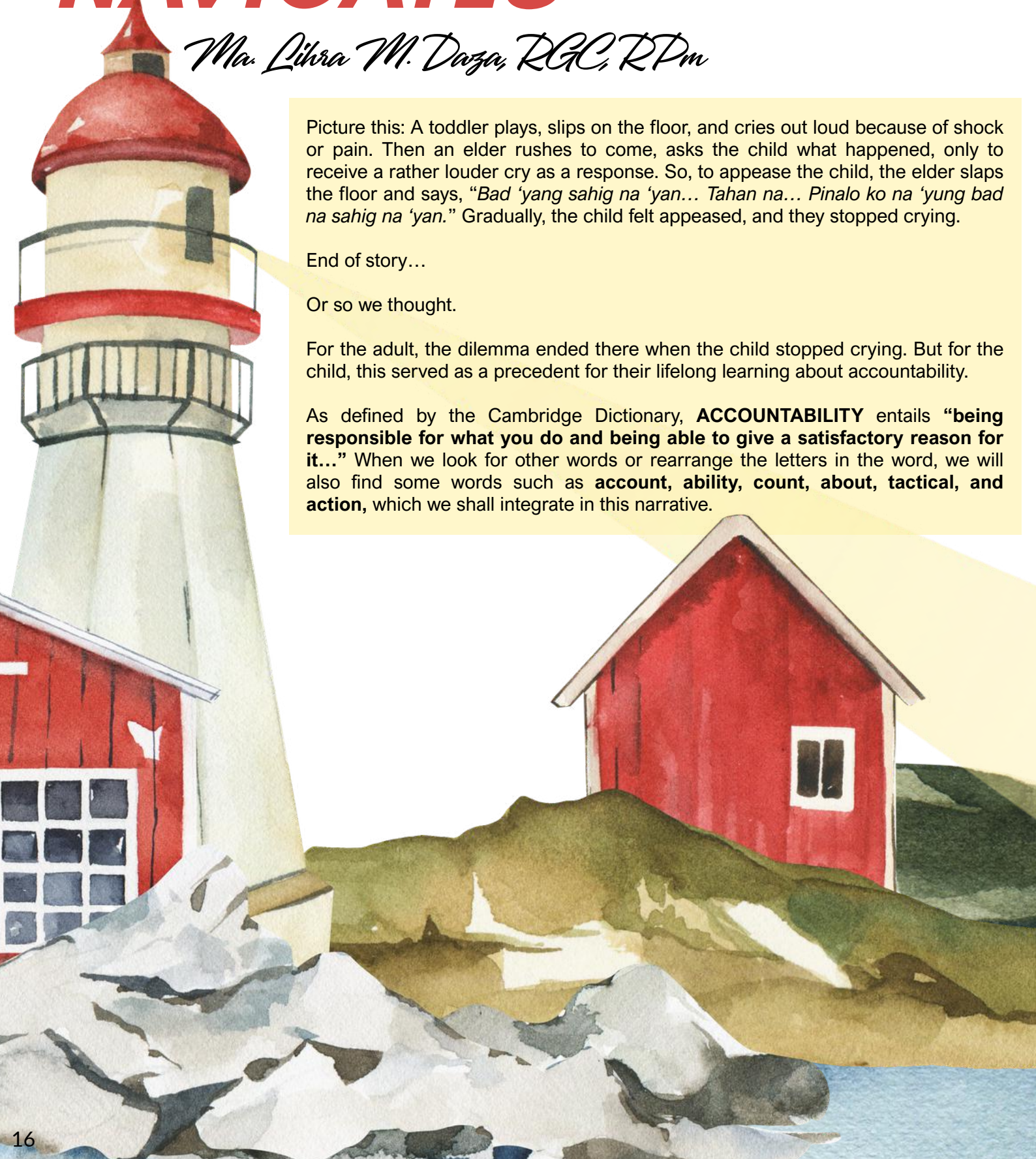
Picture this: A toddler plays, slips on the floor, and cries out loud because of shock or pain. Then an elder rushes to come, asks the child what happened, only to receive a rather louder cry as a response. So, to appease the child, the elder slaps the floor and says, “Bad ‘yang sahiḡ na ‘yan... Tahan na... Pinalo ko na ‘yung bad na sahiḡ na ‘yan.” Gradually, the child felt appeased, and they stopped crying.

End of story...

Or so we thought.

For the adult, the dilemma ended there when the child stopped crying. But for the child, this served as a precedent for their lifelong learning about accountability.

As defined by the Cambridge Dictionary, **ACCOUNTABILITY** entails “**being responsible for what you do and being able to give a satisfactory reason for it...**” When we look for other words or rearrange the letters in the word, we will also find some words such as **account, ability, count, about, tactical, and action**, which we shall integrate in this narrative.



ACCOUNT. *To explain why something happened, give a reason for an action, or help explain the cause of an event or outcome.*

In reference to the example at the beginning of this narrative, what could be a possible explanation as to why the circumstance happened?

It may be because the floor was slippery, the floor surface was naturally smooth or slippery, a loose rug may have shifted under the toddler's feet, or because of the toddler's footwear or lack thereof. We can think of a lot of factors to which we can attribute the unfortunate instance, and none of them were the toddler's responsibility. But, the adult's attitudes and practices towards answering the questions "*What happened?*", "*Why did it happen?*", and "*What can we do about it?*" will tell how the toddler will understand situations in the future and take appropriate responsibility for what they can control.

In other instances, the elders may not blame inanimate objects such as the floor, but they may blame the person who is with the child instead: the sibling, cousin, or a playmate, for the sake of having someone to blame, even though they know that none of them is at fault. Over time, this instills an idea in the young that they can account for everything that happens to something or someone, but never themselves.

ABILITY. *The capacity to make responsible choices, carry out our duties, and deal with the results of our actions.*

This external attribution, as learned by the child, may later on develop as a loss in the sense of agency and possibly as learned helplessness.

Learned helplessness appears as a persistent belief that important outcomes are always due to external factors other than the self. Therefore, if these beliefs are repeatedly reinforced, the child may eventually stop attempting to actively work on a situation because their perceived lack of control and ability has led them to believe that their actions will make little to no difference, even if some aspects are actually within their control. It may also reinforce an idea that whenever something bad happens, they can magically get out of the situation because eventually, something or someone will help them get out of it. On the other hand, a person with a sense of agency can say "*I am in control of my actions and choices.*"

Thus, if the child grows up consistently believing that outcomes are completely outside of their control and ability, they will eventually feel that their own choices and actions have little influence on their circumstances.



So, if the child is not personally responsible for the slip but blaming something or someone is not the best thing to do either, what should be done instead?

Accountability should not be about blame. After all, what does blame solve? Instead, it is about assuming the power to change the direction of the situation.

The closest, if not the most accurate, translation of accountability in Filipino is “Pananagutan”. Derived from the root word “sagot”, *Pananagutan* is about accepting the responsibility of being answerable for something and standing by the outcomes, including taking appropriate actions to fulfill obligations, correct mistakes, and make things right whenever necessary.

Considering these perspectives, *pananagutan* is not about carrying blame but about recognizing what is ours to do and choosing to take appropriate responsibility.

COUNT. Understanding that every action, no matter how small, matters and can affect the people and situations around us.

Pananagutan begins with recognizing that our actions matter because even our seemingly small choices affect not only us, but even other people and the situations around us.

As we teach the young about *pananagutan*, we also have to help them develop the understanding that we are all accountable to one another; therefore, being accountable is to reflect on the question, “How might my action affect others?”

ABOUT. Being ready to do what we are responsible for and prepared for what may happen next.

Pananagutan also means being prepared to do what is expected of us and being ready to respond when circumstances change.

As adults, we have the power to influence the young about acknowledging and owning responsibilities, preparing for what may happen, and being willing to step up when something needs to be done. While this may seem difficult, we are not meant to control every choice a child makes. Instead, we are meant to provide enough light so they see and learn how to analyze the best possible options and choose wisely, and to stand with them as they bear the logical consequences of their choices. While we can neither make the journey for them nor save them when things go south, we can be their lighthouse... to guide them towards the right path and be a sturdy wall to lean on as they respond to set things right, when necessary. We can be their safe and secure place where they can engender a sense of security that, as they navigate the outcomes of their decisions, they can learn, and they can find their way back to where they should steer, using the values we have imparted in them as part of their core being.



ACTION. Turning responsible choices into behavior and taking ownership of what we do and its effects on others.

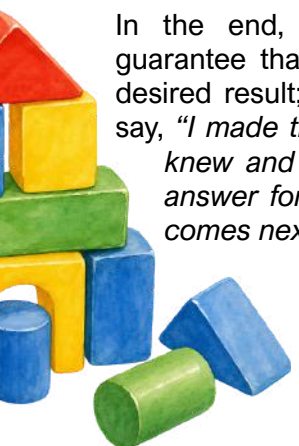
Pananagutan becomes more meaningful when it is translated into action: When we teach our young to account for their decisions, own the choices they make, and stand by the consequences that follow; not merely acknowledging what was done, but having the courage to recognize the impact and to respond appropriately to their results. **TACTICAL** would be another term that will be most helpful in the context of taking purposeful steps to address responsibilities, solve problems, and accomplish what must be done.

This is where the true weight of accountability lies. It is indeed easier to attribute failures to circumstances or to someone else, but accountability calls us to look inward and ask ourselves, *“What was within my ability to do, and what can I do now?”*

Thus, another crucial role that we, as adults, should fulfill is to inculcate and model to our young that every difficult decision should be made with the best of our ability and whatever the results may be, we must be willing to account for our choices, learn from the outcome, make humble amends when necessary, and use our ability to do better moving forward. After all, children learn best not from our words, but more from what they witness us doing and how we live life with accountability ourselves.

Our children/ward must also learn from us that whenever we make the best possible choice given our resources and circumstances, some results will remain beyond our control. Thus, we must learn to distinguish between what is ours to carry and what is not; to act within our ability, seek support when needed, and learn from whatever follows. To put it simply, to take appropriate responsibility.

In the end, *pananagutan* is not about the guarantee that every decision will produce the desired result; instead, it is about being able to say, *“I made the best choice I could with what I knew and what I had... and I am willing to answer for it, learn from it, and act on what comes next.”*



And so, to both the young and the old:

ACCOUNT for your actions.
Be ABLE to take ownership
of your choices.
Make IT count, because...
You make the difference.

So, going back to the scene from the start of this narrative, it may or may not be the toddler's fault to slip, but is it the floor's fault?

References:

How discipline and responsibility teach emotional resilience (2019, September 21). Find My Therapist. Retrieved from <https://findmytherapist.com/resources/child-teen/how-discipline-and-responsibility-teach-emotional-resilience/>

Isaac, F. (2021). *Pananagutan: Accountability and the Struggle for Filipino Nationhood*. Retrieved from <https://accountabilityresearch.org/pananagutan-accountability-and-the-struggle-for-filipino-nationhood/>

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education; Board on Children, Youth, and Families; Committee on Supporting the Parents of Young Children; Breiner H, Ford M, Gadsden VL, editors. *Parenting Matters: Supporting Parents of Children Ages 0-8*. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2016 Nov 21. 2, Parenting Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK402020/>

Sugiarti R, Erlangga E, Suhariadi F, Winta MVI, Pribadi AS. The influence of parenting on building character in adolescents. *Heliyon*. 2022 Apr 27;8(5):e09349. doi: 10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e09349. PMID: 35586332; PMCID: PMC9108886.



THE PARABLE OF THE INVISIBLE BACKPACK

A short story about Accountability

by Ma. Lihra M. Daza, RGC, RDM



One beautiful morning at the University of the East Basic Education Department, the students of Grade 4-Maaasahan saw their teacher named Teacher Liah, carrying a transparent but unusual backpack. It was not filled with school supplies or snacks, but with shining stars, colorful ribbons, and pebbles of different sizes.

Curious, Connie, one of the students, asked, “Teacher Liah, what is inside your backpack?”

Teacher Liah smiled and said, “This is my invisible backpack. Everyone has one, too, but only the person who owns it can see it.”

The children looked at each other in surprise. Then, Billy asked, “Do we have invisible backpacks, too?”

“Yes,” said Teacher Liah. “Inside your backpacks are your choices, words, actions, and lessons you learn from your mistakes each day.”

The students thought about what Teacher Liah said as they started their classes for the day.





Before the morning recess, Izzy shared her crayons with a classmate who had forgotten hers during their art class. A shiny, colorful ribbon appeared in Izzy's invisible backpack.

Then, during recess, Marco accidentally knocked over his classmate Nathalie's tumbler as he ran, causing the water to spill on the floor. He looked around and was about to walk away, but he stopped to think, "It was not my intention to knock Nathalie's tumbler, but since it was my doing, I must help clean it up." At once, a golden star appeared on his invisible backpack.

Surprised, Marco asked, "What happened?"

Teacher Liah smiled and responded, "That is the magic of our invisible backpacks. When we make mistakes and choose to own them, fix them, and learn from them, a shining star or a colorful ribbon appears inside. And the more we take responsibility for what is ours, the lighter our backpack becomes even as it fills with more good things. But when we hide our mistakes or blame others for our actions, heavy rocks begin to fill our backpacks. The more we refuse to carry what is ours, the heavier they become."



After recess, two friends, Alex and Xander, were playing and hitting each other with a towel when they accidentally hit another classmate who was just passing by. Because their classmate got angry, each one said hurtful words and blamed the other.

“It was his fault!” Alex said, pointing to Xander.

“No, it was Alex’s!”

Their invisible backpacks became heavy, and they both complained.

Teacher Liah gathered them together and asked, “What do you think caused your backpack to be heavy?”

Alex thought for a moment and said, “I was holding the towel, and I said something hurtful to Xander.”

Xander agreed and said, “I was holding the towel, too. And I put all the blame on Alex instead of admitting my part.”

Teacher Liah responded, “You do not have to carry everything, but you should carry what is yours.”

The children apologized to their classmate and to each other, and made peace. Then, their backpacks felt lighter again.



At the end of the day, Teacher Liah asked everyone to close their eyes and imagine their invisible backpacks.

“What good things did you place inside your backpack today?” she asked.

The students thought of kindness, effort, honesty, and courage.

“Was there anything heavy?” Teacher Liah asked again.

Some remembered mistakes, unkind words, and blame.

“What can you do about them tomorrow?” Teacher Liah asked.

The children thought of saying sorry, trying again, helping others, and making better choices.

Teacher Liah then shared one final lesson for the day: “Remember, your backpack belongs to you, and you will carry everything you choose to put in there. But not all things belong in your backpack. Other people’s choices, actions, and mistakes are theirs to carry.”

“Sometimes, you will put good things in your backpack, things like kindness, honesty, patience, and hard work.”

“Sometimes, you will also forget things and make mistakes instead. You will make poor choices. You will hurt someone’s feelings. You will fail, and your backpacks will feel heavier.”

“When this happens, the key is to ask yourself, “What can I do to make things right?” and “What can I learn so I can make a better choice next time?” It is important to understand that whatever is truly yours, you must have the courage to own.”





Maya raised her hand and asked, “So having a heavy backpack isn’t always bad?”

Teacher Liah smiled, “Not really. Sometimes it means you are carrying something important that needs your attention.”

“Like responsibility?” Ben asked.

Teacher Liah nodded.

“Like admitting when we are wrong?” Helen also asked.

“Yes.”

“Like fixing our mistakes?” Charles also asked.

Teacher Liah nodded and smiled. “The goal is not to have a backpack with nothing inside. The goal is to become someone strong enough to carry what is truly theirs, humble enough to admit when they are wrong, brave enough to make things right, and wise enough to learn from it.”



From that day on, the students see each other as carrying their own invisible backpacks. And although nobody else could see them, each of them knew what was inside. Some carried kindness. Some carried courage. Some carried lessons from their mistakes. And all of them were learning the same important truth: “Their backpack is theirs. They are responsible for taking care of what’s in there.”

What about you? What good things did you place inside your backpack today?





Four Pillars of Eco-Friendly Living



Maxine B. de Luna-Narito, RGC

Being eco-friendly doesn't mean spending extra money or changing your whole life overnight. It's about making smart, daily choices that save you cash and fit your schedule as a student—whether you're living in a dorm, at home with family, or working late shifts between classes.

These four pillars show how tiny shifts in your routine can build real momentum—for the environment, your budget, and everyone in your circle. In this article, we'll walk you through the Four Pillars of Eco-Friendly Living, practical steps you can start today without altering your lifestyle.

1 The "Tingi" Swap: Disrupting Sachet Culture

The tingi (micro-retail) system is a huge part of daily Filipino life. It is incredibly convenient to buy exactly what we need for the day—a single sachet of shampoo, a small pack of coffee, or a quick cup of morning taho.

While budget-friendly, this system has made our country one of the world's leading consumers of single-use plastic.

- **The Small Choice:** Bring your own small jar, container, or reusable cup when you head to the sari-sari store or wait for the taho vendor.
- **The Ripple Effect:** This does much more than save a single piece of plastic. It starts a conversation. Your neighbors will see you do it, the vendors will realize people want plastic-free options, and slowly, bringing your own container becomes a normal sight in your street.



2

The Energy Save: Cultivating Household Mindfulness

Electricity is truly high and expensive. Leaving chargers plugged in or keeping a fan running in an empty room might seem like minor things, but they contribute to “vampire power” draw and waste valuable resources.

- **The Small Choice:** Actively unplug devices once they're fully charged, turn off the aircon 30 minutes before leaving a room, set a “power-down time” with your family or roommates (e.g., 10:00 PM) to switch off non-essential devices, and use natural light during the day instead of turning on lamps or ceiling lights.

You can become more mindful of your household's energy footprint by doing a quick weekly check-in on your energy habits. At the end of the week, pick one habit to improve (for example, unplugging chargers or turning off the fan when leaving a room). Use timers or phone alarms as gentle reminders, compare electricity bills when possible to see your progress, and—most importantly—lead by example, not by lecture.

- **The Ripple Effect:** The practice builds a shared mindset of malasakit (care), and becomes a shared family value rather than a chore. A cheaper electricity bill also comes as a perk!

3

Redefining “Normal” in Your Community

For a long time, easy convenience has dictated our habits. Throwing all our trash into a single plastic bag or taking a brand-new plastic bag for every single vegetable at the palengke (wet market) has been our default.

- **The Small Choice:** Carry a bayong or a foldable eco-bag wherever you go, and take the extra two seconds at home to separate nabubulok (biodegradable) from di-nabubulok (non-biodegradable) waste.
- **The Ripple Effect:** When waste segregation and reusable bags stop being treated as “different” and start being treated as the standard, the culture of our entire community shifts.





4

Change Requires Participation, Not Perfection

You do not need to lead a national movement to make an impact. By simply changing how you shop, how you manage your home, and how you handle your trash, you are actively voting for a cleaner, healthier environment.

#MakeASmartChoicetoday

References:

World Bank Group. (2021). Market study for the Philippines: Plastics circularity opportunities and barriers. East Asia and Pacific Region Marine Plastics Series. World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/35295>

Republic of the Philippines. (2001). Republic Act No. 9003: The Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000. Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines. <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2001/01/26/republic-act-no-9003/>

Character *Under* Pressure

Anne Camille D. Mercado, RPhm

*Who you are shows in
the choices you make.*

We all have moments when things don't go according to plan. A deadline gets stressful. A friend misunderstands us. Someone says something that gets under our skin. We feel pressured to do what everyone else is doing. In moments like these, it is easy to let emotions take over. But these moments also give us an opportunity to ask:

*What kind of
person do I
choose to be?*

This is where uprightness of character comes in. Uprightness of character is more than simply knowing what is right. It is choosing to do what is right even when it is difficult, inconvenient, or unpopular. And sometimes, our character is most visible when we are under pressure.



Character Is in the Little Things

We often imagine that character is revealed through big, life-changing decisions. In reality, it is built through the little things we do every day.



It is being honest even when nobody would know if you weren't.

It is admitting when you made a mistake.

It is treating someone with respect even when you disagree.

It is refusing to join in when someone is being embarrassed or bullied.

It is keeping your word.

It is choosing not to spread something that could hurt another person.

It is having the courage to say, "That's not right," even when your friends disagree.

These may seem like small choices, but repeated choices become habits, and habits help shape who we become.

What Happens When You're Under Pressure?

Here's a quick character check. Imagine you're angry with someone. Your friends are telling you to fight back. You're tempted to send an angry message, post something online, or say something hurtful. What would you do? You could react immediately.

Or you could pause.

Take a breath.

Think about the consequences.

Walk away if you need to.

Talk to someone you trust.

Then choose a response that reflects the person you want to be.

That pause matters.

Research suggests that difficulties with emotion regulation are associated with higher levels of aggression, highlighting the importance of learning healthier ways to manage strong emotions (Smith et al., 2025). In other words, learning to manage our emotions is not about becoming emotionless. It is about becoming more intentional with our actions.



Real Strength Looks Different

Sometimes, we are taught that being strong means never backing down. But real strength can look very different.

Strength is walking away when you could escalate.

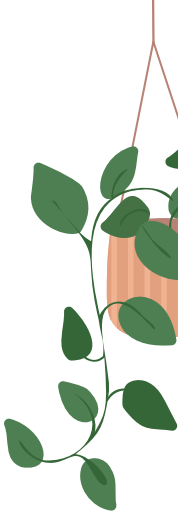
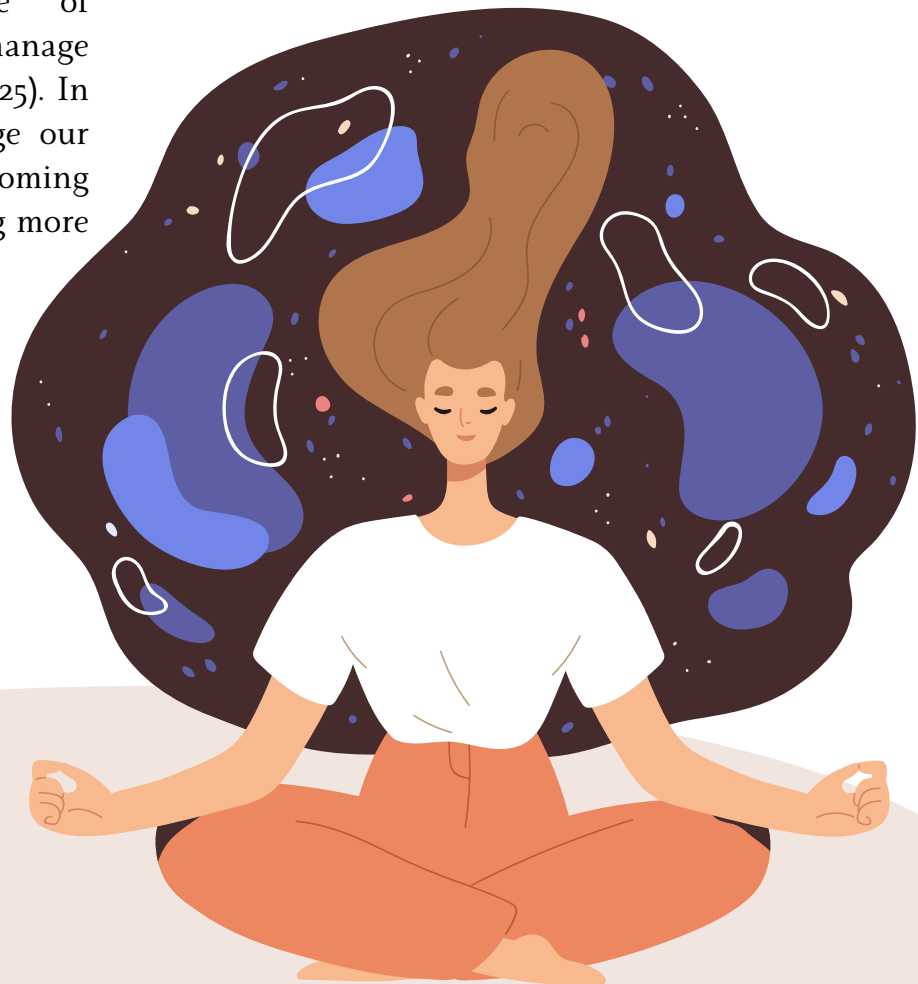
Strength is apologizing when your pride says not to.

Strength is asking for help when you need it.

Strength is standing up for someone who cannot stand up for themselves.

Strength is choosing peace without being afraid of what others might think.

Being strong does not mean having control over other people. It means learning to have control over yourself.



Your Character, Your Choice

No one gets it right all the time.
We will get angry. We will make mistakes.
We will sometimes say or do things we regret.
What matters is what we choose to do next.

Do we take responsibility?
Do we make things right?
Do we learn from the experience?
Do we choose differently the next time?

Uprightness of character is not about being perfect. *It is about consistently choosing to become better.* And every day gives us another chance to practice. So the next time you find yourself under pressure, remember:



Pause. Think. Choose.

Because your circumstances
may test your character, but
your choices define it.
What kind of person will
you choose to be?



Reference:

Smith, K., Jones, A., Daly, N., Widdrington, H., Garofalo, C., & Gillespie, S. (2025). Emotion regulation and aggression: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Aggressive Behavior*, 52(1), e70055. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ab.70055>

Forged by the Blade: A Fencer's Journey Beyond the Bout

A Feature Story on Mr. Shawn Nicollei S. Felipe

SEA Games medalists, UAAP Champion, and Five-Time Reigning UAAP MVP in Fencing

Behind the wire-mesh mask lies the dedication to academic rigor and athletic excellence of our UAAP Season 89 opening ceremony torchbearer.

Meet our Featured Person in this Heartwork Issue

Mr. Shawn Nicollei S. Felipe is a full-blooded Red Warrior-fencer, UAAP champion, and Southeast Asian Games medalist. But to his loved ones and peers, he is simply *Kulay*.

He has been juggling between his responsibilities as a son, a friend, a student, and a student-athlete since he was six years old. His untiring commitment to fencing has led him to currently hold a top-300 world ranking, having recently reached 263rd in the world—a testament to his pursuit of progress and excellence in every bout.

In this feature, *Kulay* will briefly walk us through his journey and how upholding his core values helped in his *life's phrase d'armes*.





How has fencing shaped you as a person?

As someone who has dedicated most of his life to his chosen sport, *Kulay* has learned, at a young age, the essence of being goal-oriented and resilient through the profound influence of Fencing and the opportunities that come with it.

“

*I started fencing when I was in Grade 1, at just six years old. From that young age, I already became a student-athlete, and that was when I learned that **pursuing a dream also comes with sacrifices.***

My journey has never been easy. There were sacrifices, injuries, pressure, exhaustion, and moments when I questioned whether I could keep going. But every challenge taught me something. Fencing taught me discipline, but the journey taught me resilience.



What sacrifices, habits, and routines have helped you pursue excellence in both academics and athletics?

Kulay has recognized that excellence in his sport would entail difficult choices that he must make in his pursuit of greater goals. As a student-athlete, he discovered the need to effectively fulfill his various roles despite the challenges he encounters and the importance of always circling back to his core values and purpose for working hard.

“

Balancing academics and fencing was never easy. I had to learn how to manage my time between training, school, and my responsibilities. I also had to sacrifice time with my family and give up some of the things other kids enjoyed, like simply playing outside with friends. At that time, playing and having fun were important to me, but fencing became more important because I knew I had a goal.

*Throughout my journey, I also made sure to give the same respect to my academics that I give to my sport. There were times when I had very little sleep because of training, competitions, travel, and schoolwork, but I still made sure to attend my classes, cooperate with my teachers and classmates, and work hard to maintain high grades. I believe that before I am an athlete, I am a student first. **Being a student-athlete taught me that excellence should not be limited to one area of my life.***

What responsibility do you believe comes with being recognized as a student-athlete and representing UE and the Philippines?

He has come to realize that his kinesthetic talent, passion, and commitment to the sport would eventually take him to the international stage, where every bout was an opportunity to carry the honor of representing the Filipino spirit of resilience.

“

*When I entered high school, that goal [of becoming a good fencer] became a responsibility. In Grade 8, I became part of the Philippine National Fencing Team, and everything became more serious. I was no longer competing only for myself; **I was carrying the responsibility of representing my country.***





What have you learned about teamwork from your experiences with teammates, coaches, and other people who have supported your athletic journey?

Kulay emphasized that his success was not his alone. It was a labor of love made possible by a support team who stood beside him through life's attacks and parries – encouraging him through setbacks, celebrating him and his victories, and reminding him of what he was capable of. With them, he was able to find the courage to pursue his goals, push beyond his limits, and boldly challenge the boundaries he once thought he could not cross.

“

For me, teamwork is a collaboration of effort, where even the smallest thing you do can make a difference to the team. Through my experiences with teammates, coaches, and the people who have supported my athletic journey, I learned that success is not only about individual performance but also about helping and encouraging one another. I learned to communicate, trust my teammates, listen to my coaches, and stay supportive even during difficult moments.

I also learned this value from my parents. I saw how they treat and help other people even when they do not receive anything in return. Their example taught me that teamwork is not always about getting something back, but about being willing to contribute, support others, and do what you can to help.

How do you stay committed to your goals during times when training becomes difficult, results do not come quickly, or motivation is low?

Because being a student-athlete also demands sacrifices, *Kulay* admitted that he naturally yearned for things that people his age normally would enjoy. He also shared that his bigger plans for himself and his future often kept him grounded.

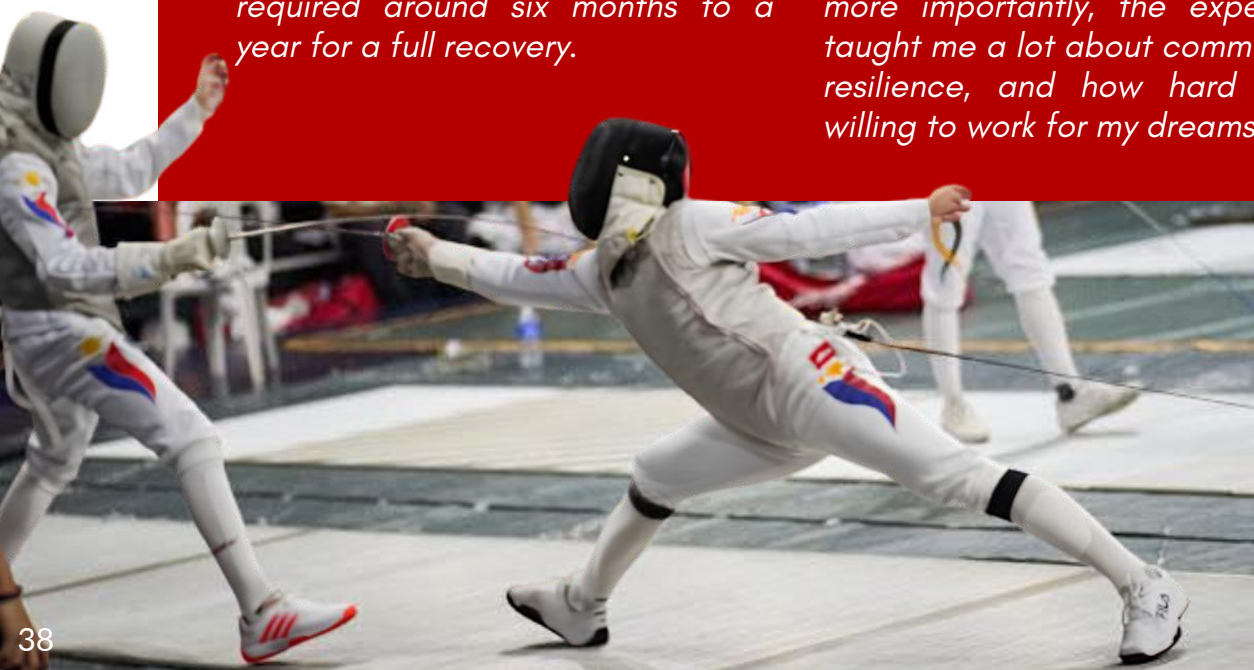
The hurdles that he faced also challenged him personally and professionally, and his choice to remain committed to the sport and to continue fighting for his dreams brought him to where he is at present.

“

As a teenager, I naturally wanted to socialize, make friends, and experience the things that come with growing up. But I learned to make difficult choices and give more of my time to becoming the athlete I wanted to be.

One of the biggest challenges I faced came during my first year of college, when I competed in my first Asian Fencing Championships. I had trained so hard for that competition, giving everything I had to prepare. Unfortunately, I suffered a hamstring injury during the competition and was unable to continue. It was heartbreaking because I knew how much work I had put into that moment. My injury required around six months to a year for a full recovery.

And when I returned to the Philippines, I had an important qualifying competition coming up. I only had one week of rehabilitation before I had to compete again. I was still injured, had barely trained, and knew that competing could make my recovery even harder. But I also knew that if I did not compete, I could lose valuable points and fall behind in the rankings. And so, I had to make one of the hardest decisions: to continue competing. Despite all of that, thank God, I still managed to achieve a bronze medal in that competition. Looking back, I realized that being an athlete sometimes means doing everything you can for the sport you love. But more importantly, the experience taught me a lot about commitment, resilience, and how hard I was willing to work for my dreams.



When you fall short of your expectations, how do you respond, and what do you do differently afterward?

Kulay has learned to meet challenges with optimism and to transform pressure into fuel for growth. Rather than allowing the expectations to weigh him down, he sees them as an invitation to improve and nurture his psychological hardiness. In learning to flourish amid adversities, he was able to grow not only as a high-caliber athlete, but also as a full-blooded Red Warrior.

“

*My UAAP career also brought its own kind of pressure. I was fortunate enough to receive the most MVP awards in fencing, and while that achievement made me proud, it also came with expectations. People began to expect more from me, and sometimes I felt the pressure to always perform at my best. My student-athlete journey **taught me that instead of letting the pressure bring me down, I have to see it as an opportunity to become better**, to improve myself, and to continue growing not only as a fencer but also as a person.*

As a student-athlete who can influence and inspire other students, what can you impart to them about the relevance of upholding your core values in the pursuit of your life goals?

His journey taught him that the measure of true success lies in the courage to keep showing up, the strength to rise after setbacks, and the commitment to pursue one's dreams, even amid intense pressure and the difficult decisions that his career demands. With all he has been through, Kulay has realized that the struggles he overcame were not merely obstacles along the way, but experiences that are important in shaping him into the athlete and person he is today.

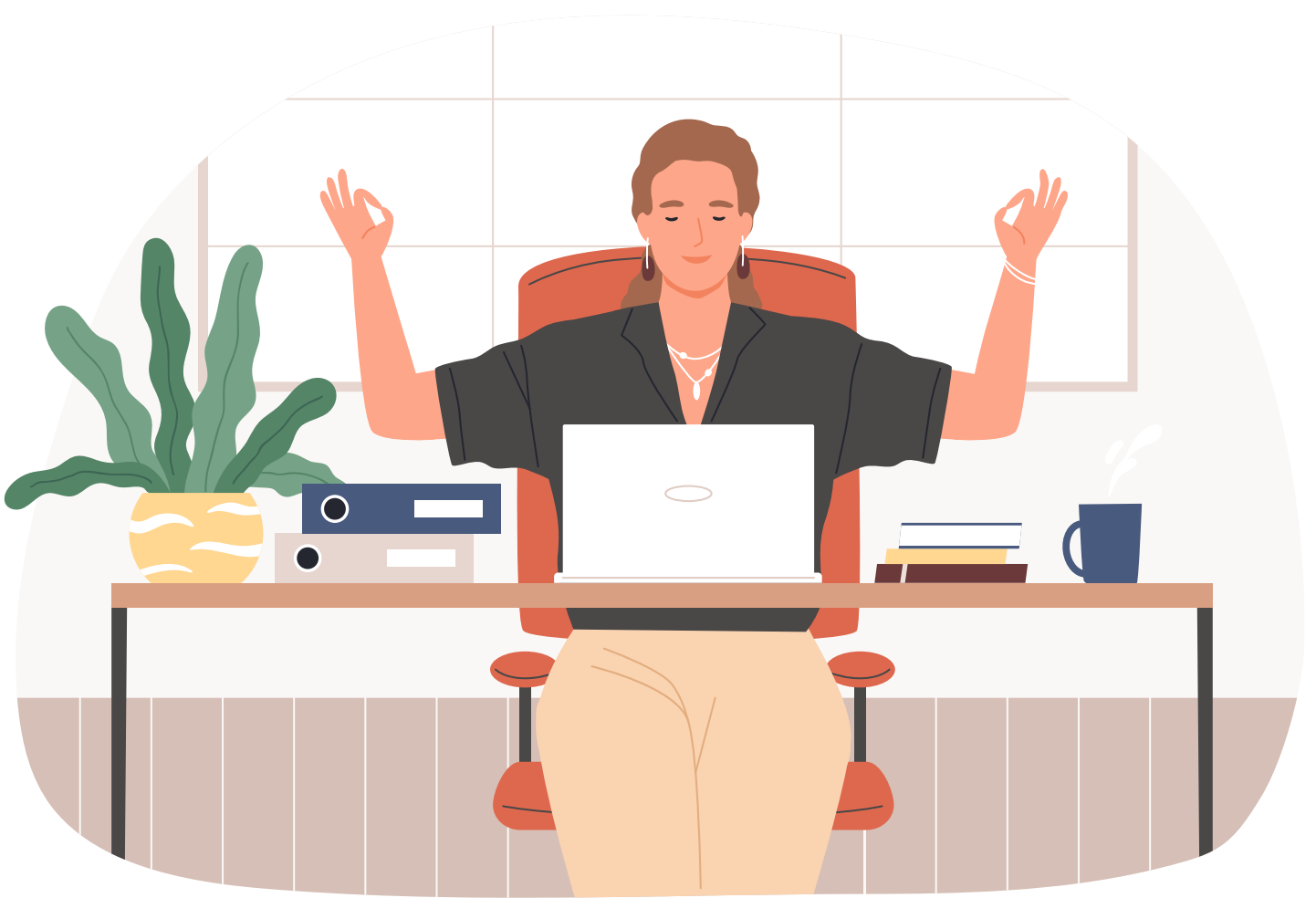
“

*I learned that success is not simply about winning medals, receiving awards, or becoming an MVP. It is about **continuing to show up when things are difficult**, choosing your goals even when sacrifices are required, and **finding the courage to start again after setbacks**. I am still **learning and still growing**, but every struggle has helped shape the athlete and person I am today. And if there is one thing I have learned throughout this journey, it is that **sometimes the hardest battles are the ones that make you stronger**, and the sacrifices you make today can become the foundation of the dreams you achieve tomorrow.*



Reference:

<https://fie.org/athletes/50396>



Understanding Integrity: Living with Honesty and Wholeness

Dr. Angélico B. Clavero , RGC

Integrity is more than simply being honest. It is the quality of having strong moral principles and remaining faithful to them, even when doing so is difficult or when no one is watching. At its heart, integrity means being whole—having our values, words, and actions aligned with one another.

The word *integrity* comes from the Latin word *integer*, meaning “whole” or “complete.” This origin reflects an important idea: a person with integrity is not divided between what they believe and how they behave; their character remains consistent regardless of the circumstances.

The dilemma of teaching *integrity* to young warriors

Teaching integrity to young people can be challenging when the world around them appears to send a very different message. We tell children and teenagers to be honest, keep their promises, take responsibility for their actions, and do what is right even when no one is watching. Yet, at the same time, **they see prominent politicians, celebrities, business leaders, and other public figures accused of wrongdoing and seemingly continue to enjoy success, influence, and admiration.**

This contradiction can leave young people wondering: *If people can do wrong and still succeed, why should I choose to do what is right?*

This does not mean that teaching integrity is futile. In fact, it makes the responsibility even greater. Young people need to understand that integrity is neither measured by whether a person is famous, wealthy, powerful, or admired, nor is wrongdoing made acceptable simply because someone escapes punishment. **Integrity is a matter of character**—choosing what is right because it is right, not merely because there is a consequence for doing wrong.

Perhaps one of the most important lessons we can teach young people is that **integrity is not about winning every time, but about remaining true to who we are when the world pressures us to compromise our values.** This is precisely what makes *The Empty Pot* by Charlotte Dumaesq Hunt such a thought-provoking story. Through a simple yet powerful narrative, the story reminds us that true integrity is revealed not by success or recognition, but by the courage to be honest when honesty comes at a cost.

The Empty Pot

Long ago, a wise king wanted to find an honest child to become his heir. He gave every child a seed and said, "Plant it, care for it, and return in one year with what you have grown."

A boy named Jack planted his seed and watered it faithfully every day. But no matter how hard he tried, nothing grew. When the year was over, the other children arrived with beautiful flowers and tall plants. Jack came carrying only an empty pot.

The children laughed at him, but Jack stood quietly before the king.

The king smiled and announced, "This is the child who will be my heir."

Everyone was shocked.

Then the king explained, "The seeds I gave you were boiled. They could never grow. Most of you replaced your seeds to impress me, but Jack was honest enough to bring back exactly what he was given."

The king placed the crown on Jack's head and said, "A leader must have integrity. Honesty is worth far more than appearances."

From that day on, everyone remembered that true integrity means doing what is right, even when it is difficult.



How to instill “integrity” in the young warriors entrusted to our care?

As our children witness moments when even prominent figures fail to uphold integrity, we are reminded that character cannot simply be taught—it must be modeled, nurtured, and lived every day. More than ever, we, as adults, have a vital role in helping them understand that integrity is not merely a value to profess, but a principle to uphold through our choices, actions, and everyday conduct. While some public figures may normalize dishonesty, corruption, or questionable behavior, we, as parents and educators, can demonstrate that success should never come at the expense of honesty and good character. We must take the lead by consistently modeling honesty, accountability, and respect in all our undertakings, so we can shape a generation that values character over popularity, influence, or power.

HERE ARE SOME PRACTICAL WAYS ON INSTILLING INTEGRITY:

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Children notice what we do more than what we say. Keep your promises, admit when you are wrong, apologize when necessary, and be honest even when telling the truth is difficult. Treat everyone with respect, including people who may have different opinions or roles in society. Children do not need perfect adults; they need consistent ones.

PRAISE HONESTY

When a child admits making a mistake, recognize their honesty before addressing the consequence. A simple response such as, “Thank you for telling me the truth. Now let's work out how to make this right,” teaches children that honesty is valued, even when mistakes have consequences.

TEACH RESPONSIBILITY

Children need to understand that actions have consequences. Instead of always protecting them from discomfort or solving their problems for them, help them take responsibility and make things right. This might mean apologizing, repairing something they damaged, returning something that does not belong to them, or admitting their mistake without blaming someone else.



ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Integrity grows when children learn to make good choices even when no one is watching. Ask questions such as:

- What do you think is the right thing to do?
- How would you feel if someone did that to you?
- Would you make the same choice if nobody knew?

These questions encourage children to develop their own sense of right and wrong rather than simply following rules out of fear of punishment.



TEACH THAT HOW WE SUCCEED MATTERS

Children should learn that success is not valuable if it comes through dishonesty or cheating. Getting a good grade by cheating, for example, may produce a good result, but it does not build good character. Teach them that how we achieve something matters just as much as what we achieve.



USE EVERYDAY EXAMPLES

Stories, movies, and real-life situations provide opportunities for perspective-taking and to talk about integrity. Ask children why someone made a particular choice, what they might have done differently, and what consequences followed.



Ultimately, teaching integrity is about helping children understand that who they become matters more than simply getting what they want. When children see integrity modeled, honesty encouraged, responsibility expected, and mistakes treated as opportunities to make things right, they begin to understand that doing the right thing is valuable—even when no one is watching.

The challenge before us as adults is to be like the King in the story *The Empty Pot*—to uphold honesty and integrity and, by our example, guide the young warriors toward the right path.





THE STRENGTH TO SERVE: Discovering the Warrior Within

Araceli Deang, RGC, RPsy, RPh

When we hear the word “Warrior,” we often imagine someone who is strong, brave, and ready to fight. But in pre-colonial Philippines, warriors were more than fighters: They were protectors, community members, and people who served their communities.

Across the Philippines, groups such as the *Maharlika* in Luzon and *Timawa* in the Visayas had important roles in defending their communities and supporting their leaders. They joined expeditions, protected their territories, and helped their communities survive and grow. Among some Visayan groups, tattoos were also used to show bravery and achievements.

Their story teaches us an important lesson:

**Being strong is not only
about winning battles.
It is also about having
the courage to help and
protect others.**

THE WARRIOR AS A SERVANT LEADER

Being a warrior is not just about being physically strong. It is also about having the courage to help others, take responsibility, and do what is right.

Today, young people face different kinds of challenges. Academic pressure, friendships, family responsibilities, social expectations, and personal struggles can sometimes feel like battles of their own.

These challenges require a different kind of warrior—one who shows resilience, honesty, compassion, and purpose.

Instead of asking only, “What can I achieve?” we can also ask:

“How can I use my strengths to help others?”

This is what servant leadership is all about.

Service does not always have to be something big. It can be as simple as helping a classmate with a lesson, listening to a friend, joining a community activity, or sharing our skills with others. Sometimes, the bravest things we do are the small acts of kindness that no one sees.



For Parents: *Teach Through Example*

Service-orientedness is something that can be first discovered at home—the first place where children discover strength, responsibility, and care.

Parents, as the first and most influential teachers, can help shape children's understanding of what it means to care for and help others by how they model kindness, responsibility, generosity, and a genuine concern and willingness to help others. Children begin to understand that **serving others is not simply an obligation, but an important part of living with purpose.**

As parents, we can help nurture these qualities by guiding children to recognize their own strengths, encouraging them to use these strengths for the good of others, and showing them that even small acts of service can make a positive and meaningful difference.



For Teachers: *Inspire Students to Serve*

Education is not only about getting good grades; it is also about learning ways to grow and flourish as a person through working with others, showing empathy, taking responsibility, and contributing to the community. Thus, teachers also play a vital role in shaping future servant leaders.

Teachers play a vital role in shaping future servant leaders by cultivating a culture of service within the classroom and the school community. By encouraging meaningful acts of service through simple classroom practices such as including someone who feels left out, volunteering for a school activity, taking the initiative to solve a problem, and uplifting and supporting each other, students show the true Warrior spirit as they learn that their time, talents, effort, and even small acts of kindness can contribute to the well-being of others; **service becomes values in action.**



RISE with PURPOSE



The warrior spirit of our ancestors can still inspire us today. It does not mean looking for conflict or proving that we are stronger than others. Instead, it means having the courage to stand for what is right, help those around us, and live with purpose.

Being a warrior means having the strength to stand up for others, the compassion to lend a helping hand, and the humility to serve without expecting praise.

The true warrior protects.

The true leader serves.

When we live by our values and use our strengths to help others, we do not rise alone.

We rise so that others can rise with us.

Mental Health is a “We” thing

John David Albay, LP, TRGC

We often think of mental health as something personal and something that we manage within ourselves. While our mental health is deeply personal, it does not exist in isolation. Our experiences are shaped by the people we interact with and the environments we are part of: our families, friendships, schools, workplaces, and communities.

For Filipinos, this idea may resonate deeply through the concept of kapwa, which is at the core of Filipino Psychology. Kapwa reminds us that the self does not exist in isolation: Our sense of self is connected to other people and to the relationships we build with them. In this sense, mental health is not only an individual concern. It is also shaped by our relationships and the environments we are part of: our families, friendships, schools, workplaces, and communities.

When we understand mental health through the lens of kapwa, caring for others becomes a shared responsibility. Listening without judgment when a friend is struggling, checking on the well-being of our family members, not only by attending to their basic needs but also to their emotional and social needs, recognizing that it is normal to struggle, to be imperfect, or to experience difficult emotions, creating spaces where people can feel that “it’s okay not to be okay,” and encouraging others to ask for help are ways of putting social responsibility into practice.

These simple acts remind us that caring for mental health does not always require us to have all the answers. Sometimes, it begins with how we treat people, how we respond to their struggles, and how willing we are to make space for their experiences.

But what does social responsibility for mental health look like in our everyday relationships? How can we practice kapwa not only as an idea but as something we live out? Perhaps we can begin with three simple practices: Pakielam, Pagkilala, and Pagsama.



REMEMBER: 3Ps

- Pakielam
- Pagkilala
- Pagsama

1 | PAKIALAM: NAPAPANSIN KITA

Parent or guardian may notice changes in a child's mood, behavior, sleep, or social interaction.

A faculty or administrative staff member may notice frequent tardiness or absences, changes in participation, or a decline in a student's academic performance.

A student may notice a classmate gradually losing interest in activities they once enjoyed.

In *kapwa*, having *pakialam* is not simply about getting involved in the lives of other people. It is about having genuine care and connection with them. *Pakielam* invites us to look beyond ourselves and become more attentive to the needs of those around us. *Pakielam* does not mean forcing ourselves into someone's personal life. It means being attentive enough to notice when someone may need care and being willing to reach out respectfully.

It may be expressed through simple acts, a sincere "*Kumusta ka?*", offering help when someone is struggling, checking on a friend, or being present when someone needs support. These actions may seem small, but they communicate an important message: "**Mahalaga ka sa akin, at hindi kita binabalewala.**"

In a society where people can easily become preoccupied with their own responsibilities and concerns, *pakialam* reminds us that **social responsibility begins with noticing and caring**. It encourages us to move from indifference to compassion, and from being mere observers to becoming people who are willing to respond.

Through *pakielam*, we recognize that caring for others is not an intrusion, but an expression of our shared humanity.



2 | PAGKILALA: NARIRINIG KITA

A parent or guardian may give their child a safe space to express their feelings without immediately judging or dismissing them.

A professor or administrator may choose to ask what may be contributing to a student's behavior instead of immediately labeling the student as lazy, irresponsible, or unmotivated.

A student may allow a classmate to share what they are experiencing instead of immediately giving advice.

For us to recognize someone's needs and experiences, our willingness to listen with genuine understanding is becoming increasingly important in today's fast-paced society. At home, in our schools, workplaces, and communities, taking time to listen can be a simple yet meaningful way to show that another person's experiences, thoughts, and feelings matter.

It can be challenging to slow down, sit with someone, and give them our time and full attention. We are often so busy responding,

working, moving, and keeping up with everything around us that we forget to simply listen. Sometimes, we even forget to give ourselves the time and space to listen to our own feelings and experiences.

Listening is a powerful way to connect with others. When we listen with empathy and understanding, we create a safe space where people feel seen, valued, and accepted. We may not always have the answers or be able to solve what someone is going through, but our willingness to listen can remind them that they do not have to go through it alone.

Listening and responding with empathy allows us to accompany a person through what they are experiencing. It means walking alongside them, not necessarily fixing their problems, but being present as they navigate their lives.

Sometimes, recognizing another person means simply allowing them to be heard.



3 | PAGSAMA: HINDI KA NAG-IISA

A parent or guardian may spend meaningful time with their child, eating together, taking a walk, watching something together, or simply sitting down and talking.

A professor or teacher may help a student connect with the appropriate support office, such as the Guidance and Counseling Office, rather than trying to handle a mental-health concern alone.

A student may stay with a friend who is having a difficult time and encourage them to seek help when needed.

The World Health Organization (WHO) emphasizes that “a person can feel lonely even when surrounded by other people, particularly when they do not feel understood, supported, or meaningfully connected” (WHO, 2025).

This reminds us that pagsama is more than simply being physically present. It means being willing to spend meaningful time with someone and creating a space where they can feel that they are not alone, regardless of what they may be going through.

Pagsama can take many forms. It may mean accompanying someone to a place where they can find support or peace, doing an activity together that provides a healthy break from their worries, sitting quietly beside them, or simply having a conversation and allowing them to share what they are experiencing. It does not always require us to solve their problems. Sometimes, what a person needs is someone who is willing to stay, listen, and be present.

At the same time, pagsama also means recognizing our own limits. Caring for someone does not mean that we have to carry their struggles alone or solve their problems ourselves. There are situations when seeking professional help is necessary.

Confidentiality is also part of caring for others and respecting what they choose to share. However, when there are concerns involving self-harm, harm to others, abuse, or immediate danger, seeking appropriate help and reporting the concern may be necessary to protect the person's safety.

To practice kapwa is not to have all the answers. Sometimes, it is simply to notice, to listen, and to stay.

Ito ay isang paanyaya na matutunan nating samahan ang iba sa pamamagitan ng PAKIALAM, PAGKILALA, at PAGSAMA, katulad ng paraan na nais din nating samahan tayo.



Reference:

World Health Organization (WHO), Social Connection, 2025.



The Ripples of Our Action

Rhian Angela A. Encomienda
JHS Peer Facilitator

Social and moral responsibility are two ideas that sound heavy, like they belong to each other in a law book or philosophy class. But in reality, they are part of our everyday life. Every small decision we make is a test of both. Social responsibility is our obligation to other people; moral responsibility is our duty to always do what is right. One looks outward at the community; the other looks inward at conscience. You cannot have one without the other.

"What is the meaning of Social & Moral Responsibility?"

To be socially responsible means understanding that your actions do not end with you. What you do affects others, even if you never meet them. Our choices create a ripple effect that, in one way or another, would affect the people around us and the environment we exist in.

When you throw garbage in the canal, you are not just making your environment dirty. You are contributing to the flood that will eventually come back to you and your community. When you share fake news online because it is funny or trending, you are not just posting for your own entertainment; you affect others by misleading them with information because they trust you and your credibility.

Moral responsibility is deeper. It is doing the right thing even when no one is watching and even when doing the wrong thing is easier. It is the voice inside you that says, *"This is wrong,"* even when everyone else is doing it. For example, it is socially irresponsible to cheat on an exam because it makes the grading unfair for everyone. But it is morally irresponsible because you are betraying your own honesty. You are teaching yourself that you can succeed through dishonesty.



“How does this affect our lives?”

Our first training ground for social responsibility is home. We are taught to respect elders, to help with chores, to consider our siblings before ourselves. When we do our part at home without being told, we are being socially responsible. We are saying “I am part of this family, not just someone who lives in this house.” A child who learns to wash his own plate and help his younger siblings with homework is learning how to be a responsible citizen later on.

In school, social responsibility means more than just following rules. It means not being a bully, not laughing when someone is being bullied, and having the courage to stand up for a classmate. It also means taking care of school facilities like they are our own. It means participating honestly in group work and not letting your groupmates do all the work while you get the same grade. As socially responsible students, we understand that education is a privilege not everyone has; we value this well by doing the best we can, not just to be academically excellent, but to perform service learning later on in life, so that we can make use of our education to pay it forward and contribute back to our communities meaningfully.

In our communities, social responsibility means caring for the environment, obeying laws not because you are afraid of getting caught but because you understand why the law exists, and helping those who are less fortunate than us. It is volunteering during Brigada Eskwela, joining clean-up drives, not buying products from companies that exploit workers, and it is also exercised by voting wisely. Social responsibility also includes considering that we are the government; thus, we should take charge of choosing the best people to fulfil their mandate to us.

Our social responsibility also extends to our digital world. It includes recognizing that we are not anonymous online—our digital space is a shared space where our every reaction, every post, every comment, and every share also impacts netizens who are real people and with real lives



MORAL RESPONSIBILITY IS OUR COMPASS

If social responsibility is about what we owe others, moral responsibility is about what we owe ourselves. It is built on values, honesty, fairness, compassion, respect, and integrity. Moral responsibility asks many difficult questions such as:

- If I can get away with it, should I still do it?
- If everyone is doing it, does it make it right?
- If doing the right thing will make me unpopular, will I still do it?

It is easy to be honest when you are praised for doing the right thing. But true honesty is tested when doing what is right comes at a cost—when you risk failing a subject because you refused to cheat, losing friends because you refused to join in gossip, or standing alone because you chose not to take part in something you know is wrong.

Moral responsibility also means owning your mistakes. A morally responsible person does not say, “It’s because of my friends,” or “It’s because of my parents.” They say, “I did it. It was wrong. I will make it right.” And that sentence requires more courage than most people have.



Small Promises, BIG STEPS



Alyza Sien S. Espiritu, RPh

Have you ever started something and then stopped before you finished?

Maybe you started building a really cool LEGO house, but then got tired. Maybe you wanted to learn how to ride a bike, draw your favorite character, or finish a puzzle, but it became difficult. Sometimes, we stop because we feel tired. Sometimes, we make a mistake and think, *"I can't do this!"*

That happens to everyone. But learning to keep going is an important part of growing up.

What does it mean to commit?

Commitment simply means choosing to keep trying because something is important to you.

For example, you might say:

"I will practice reading every day."

"I will help clean up my toys."

"I will practice for our school presentation."

"I will be a good friend."

When you make a commitment, you are making a promise to yourself or to someone else that you will try your best to follow through. It does not mean that you have to be perfect; It means that you are willing to try, learn, and try again.

An illustration of a person in mid-fall, wearing a white shirt, orange pants, and brown shoes. They are falling towards the bottom left of the page. The background is white.

Motivation Comes & Goes

Sometimes, we feel very excited about doing something. Imagine that you just got a new coloring book. You might want to color every page right away! But after a while, you might get tired, distracted, **or uninterested anymore, leading to your loss of motivation.** Motivation is the feeling that makes us want to do something. It can help us get started, but it does not always stay. Commitment helps us continue.

You might not always feel like practicing your spelling words, cleaning your room, or finishing your homework. But if you know that these things are important, you can remind yourself:

“I may not feel like doing it right now, but I can still try.”

Mistakes Are Part of the Journey

Being committed does not mean never making mistakes. You might spell a word incorrectly, miss the ball, forget your homework, or feel frustrated while learning something new. Making mistakes does not mean you should give up. Instead, mistakes can teach us what we need to improve and help us find a better way.

A good example of commitment is the story of Thomas Edison. While developing the light bulb, Edison went through many unsuccessful attempts before achieving his goal. When people asked him about failing so many times, he is famously remembered for saying that he had not failed, but had simply found many ways that did not work.

What makes his story meaningful is not just the invention itself, but his commitment to keep trying. He could have stopped when things became difficult, but he continued learning, experimenting, and improving until he reached his goal.

We may not all be inventors like Edison, but we can practice the same value of commitment in our own lives. When we make mistakes or experience setbacks, we can choose to **learn, try again, and continue working toward what matters to us.**

Falling does not mean you have failed. It means you are still learning. Commitment means choosing to take the next step even when the journey is difficult. Every try is a step forward.

“

***I have not failed.
I’ve just found
10,000 ways that
won’t work.***

-Thomas Edison

What Can You Commit To?

Commitment can be about many things. You can commit to:

- Being kind to your classmates
- Helping at home
- Taking care of your things
- Practicing a skill
- Finishing your schoolwork
- Taking care of your body
- Being honest
- Being a good friend
- Trying again when something is difficult



You don't have to make a huge promise. Sometimes, the smallest commitments can make the biggest difference.

Remember: Try, Learn, Repeat.

Commitment is not about being perfect.

It is about showing up and trying your best. When something is easy, keep going. When something is difficult, ask for help. When you make a mistake, learn from it. And when you feel like giving up, remember why you started. You can tell yourself: "I can try again."

Because every time you choose to keep going, you are learning something not only about the activity you are doing, but also about yourself. You are learning that you can be patient. You can be responsible. You can be brave. And you can grow.

Your Small Commitment

Think of one small thing you want to get better at. Maybe it is reading, helping at home, being kind, practicing a sport, or finishing your schoolwork. Now complete this sentence:

"I will commit to _____ because _____."

Remember, big accomplishments often begin with small promises that we choose to keep.

From “I Want To” to “I WILL”

Alyza Sien G. Espiritu, RPh

Have you ever started something with so much excitement, only to lose interest halfway through?

Maybe you promised yourself you would study earlier for your exams.

You downloaded a fitness app and worked out for three days.

You decided to save money but ended up spending it on something you really wanted.

Or maybe you told yourself, *“This time, I’m really going to be productive,”* only to find yourself scrolling through your phone hours later.

We’ve all been there.

The truth is, starting is often easier than continuing... and that is where commitment comes in.

COMMITMENT IS A CHOICE

Commitment means deciding that something matters enough for you to consistently put effort into it. It can involve your relationships, academics, goals, personal growth, values, or even the groups and communities you belong to.

You can commit to being a better friend. You can commit to improving your grades. You can commit to taking better care of yourself.

You can commit to your dreams.

You can commit to becoming the kind of person you want to be.

But commitment is not simply saying, *“I want this.”* It is moving from: *“I want to...”* to *“I will...”*



MOTIVATION ISN'T ALWAYS GOING TO BE THERE

We often hear that motivation is the key to success. And yes, motivation is useful. It gives us that initial spark. It makes us excited to start something new. But motivation can be unpredictable.

One day, you might feel completely ready to study. The next day, opening your notes feels like the hardest thing in the world. One day, you might feel confident about your goals. The next day, you might wonder whether you are even good enough to achieve them.

That's normal. You don't have to feel motivated every day to stay committed. Commitment means continuing to take meaningful steps even when the excitement fades. It might mean studying for 30 minutes even when you'd rather watch TikTok. It might mean apologizing when you know you made a mistake. It might mean practicing even after getting something wrong.

It might mean setting boundaries when your friends pressure you to do something that does not align with your values. Commitment is not about always feeling ready. It is about choosing what matters.

COMMITMENT HAS A PRICE

Every choice comes with another choice we don't make.

If you commit to studying, you may need to spend less time scrolling. If you commit to your health, you may need to change some habits. If you commit to your goals, you may have to say no to certain distractions. This doesn't mean you can't have fun. It simply means recognizing that your time, energy, and attention are limited.

What you consistently give your time to says something about what you value. So ask yourself: *"Does how I spend my time match what I say is important to me?"*

Let us take the emerging Filipino Tennis superstar Alex Eala. Before becoming a successful athlete, she started young and spent years training, competing, and working her way through different levels of tennis. Along the way, she also had to balance school with training and tournaments. It wasn't always easy, and she certainly didn't become a champion overnight.

Her journey reminds us that commitment isn't about being motivated every single day. It's about ***continuing to choose what matters, even when things get difficult.*** You might procrastinate, lose focus, have a bad day, or even give up on a goal for a while. That doesn't mean you failed.

Commitment is recognizing when you've fallen off track and choosing to get back on. Sometimes, commitment also looks like starting over, and starting over is still starting. So ask yourself: *"What is one thing I value enough to commit to, and what small choice can I make today to show it?"*



KNOW YOURSELF

Before committing to something, it helps to understand yourself. What matters to you?

What are your strengths? What usually gets in your way? What kind of environment helps you succeed? What are you willing to change? Self-awareness helps you make commitments that are meaningful rather than commitments you make simply because other people expect them from you.

Your friends may have different goals. Your classmates may have different priorities. Social media may make it seem like everyone else has their life figured out. They don't. Your commitment should be connected to your own values, goals, and growth.



YOUR COMMITMENT SHAPES YOU

Every time you choose to act according to your values, you are building your character. If you repeatedly choose responsibility, you become more responsible. If you repeatedly choose kindness, kindness becomes part of who you are. If you repeatedly choose discipline, you become more disciplined. Small choices may not seem important at the moment, but they add up.

Eventually, you may realize that you are not just working toward a goal. You are becoming someone. So, what will you choose? You don't need to have your entire future figured out. You don't need to be motivated every single day. You don't need a perfect plan. Start with one thing that matters to you. Ask yourself:

What do I care about?

What do I want to improve?

What am I willing to do consistently?

Then turn "I want to" into "I will."

Because your future is not created by one big decision. It is built through the small choices you make, again and again, every day.

Showing Up for What Matters

Alyza Sien S. Espiritu, RPh

At some point in college, almost everyone experiences that moment when motivation simply disappears. You start the semester with a plan. You tell yourself that this will be the semester when you stay organized, submit everything early, get enough sleep, exercise regularly, and finally have your life together.

Then the deadlines pile up. Your schedule gets messy. Something unexpected happens. You get tired. And suddenly, the motivation you had at the beginning of the semester feels completely gone. So what happens next? Do you wait until motivation comes back? Or do you find another reason to keep going?

This is where commitment becomes important.

COMMITMENT IS MORE THAN A FEELING

Commitment is the choice to dedicate yourself to something that matters to you. It can be a person, a relationship, a career, a personal goal, a value, a community, or simply the kind of person you want to become. As a college student, you may already be making commitments without realizing it.

You commit to your education.
You commit to friendships and relationships.
You commit to organizations, teams, or communities.
You commit to your future career.
You commit to personal growth.
You commit to the values you want to live by.

Some commitments are made consciously, while others develop through the choices we repeatedly make. Either way, commitment asks an important question: *"What is important enough for me to keep showing up for?"*



Motivation Starts the Journey. Commitment Sustains It.

Motivation gets a lot of credit. It is the feeling that makes us excited to start a new goal. It gives us energy and enthusiasm. But motivation is also unpredictable. It fluctuates with our emotions, environment, stress, responsibilities, and circumstances. There will be days when you feel highly motivated. There will also be days when you don't. If your actions depend entirely on how you feel, it becomes difficult to sustain long-term goals.

Commitment provides something different. It is grounded not only in how you feel today, but in what you believe matters in the long run. You may not feel motivated to study for an exam, but you know your education matters. You may not feel like having a difficult conversation, but you value your relationship. You may not feel like taking care of yourself, but you know your well-being matters.

Commitment allows you to say: *"I don't feel like doing this right now, but I know why it matters."*



Commitment Requires Responsibility

Making a commitment means taking ownership of your choices. This does not mean blaming yourself for everything that goes wrong. Life will always include circumstances beyond your control. Instead, responsibility means asking: *"Given my situation, what can I do next?"*

Maybe your original plan is no longer realistic. Adjust it.

Maybe you made a mistake. Learn from it. Maybe you are overwhelmed. Ask for help. Maybe you lost sight of your goal. Reconnect with your reason for starting.

Commitment is not rigidly following a plan regardless of what happens. Sometimes, true commitment means being flexible enough to change the plan while remaining faithful to the goal or value behind it.



The Role of Self-Awareness

You cannot make meaningful commitments without understanding yourself.

What are your values? What motivates you? What drains your energy? What patterns keep getting in your way? What kind of person do you want to become?

Self-awareness gives you insight into whether your commitments genuinely belong to you or whether you are simply pursuing expectations placed on you by family, friends, society, or social media. Not every opportunity needs to become a commitment. Not every goal needs to be pursued at the same time.

Your time, energy, and attention are limited. Commitment therefore requires intentional choice.

Commitment and Identity

One of the most powerful things about commitment is what happens over time. A commitment begins as a decision, then that decision becomes repeated action. Repeated action becomes a habit, and habits can eventually become part of our identity.

You may begin by saying: *"I want to become more disciplined."* You start making small changes. You study consistently. You manage your time. You follow through even when you don't feel like it.

Eventually, you may no longer see discipline as something you are simply trying to develop. You begin to see yourself as a disciplined person. The same can happen with compassion, responsibility, courage, honesty, resilience, and other values.

What you repeatedly choose can become part of who you are.



The Reality of Setbacks

Commitment does not guarantee success. You will still experience failure, uncertainty, disappointment, and moments when you question your choices. There may be semesters when you struggle academically. There may be relationships that don't work out. There may be goals you realize are no longer right for you. There may be moments when you have to start again. That does not make your commitment meaningless.

In fact, setbacks can reveal how deeply we understand what we are committed to. Sometimes, persistence means continuing. Sometimes, it means changing your approach. Sometimes, it means asking for help. And sometimes, it means recognizing that a particular commitment no longer aligns with your values and having the courage to let it go.

Commitment is not simply about holding on. It is about being intentional about what is worth holding on to.

Four Things to Bring Into Your Commitments

As you navigate college and prepare for life beyond it, four things can help strengthen your commitments:

Vision. Know what you are working toward. A clear picture of what you want can help you move forward when the path becomes difficult.

Insight. Know yourself. Understand your strengths, limitations, values, habits, and patterns.

Acceptance of Change. Plans will change. Circumstances will change. You will change. Learn to adapt while remaining connected to what matters.

Integration. Let your values show up in your actions. What you believe, say, and do should gradually become more aligned.



The Commitment We Make to Ourselves

College is often described as preparation for a career. But it is also a period of becoming. You are figuring out what you value, what you believe, what kind of relationships you want, what kind of work matters to you, and ultimately, what kind of person you want to be. That process does not happen through one major decision, but through hundreds of small decisions: The decision to attend class even when you are tired. The decision to ask for help instead of struggling alone. The decision to apologize. The decision to set a boundary. The decision to try again after failing. The decision to take care of yourself. The decision to keep learning.

These choices may seem ordinary, but together, they shape your life. So perhaps commitment is not about promising that you will always be motivated or that you will never fail. Perhaps it is simply about deciding: "This matters to me, and I am willing to keep showing up."

Because motivation may change from day to day. Plans may change. Circumstances may change. Even your goals may change. But when you understand what truly matters to you, you can make intentional choices about where to place your time, energy, and effort. And sometimes, that is what commitment really is:

***Choosing what matters
and showing up for it,
one day at a time.***



References:

Bremont, K. (2023, September 28). Cultivating commitment: The key to student success. EIS Bratislava. <https://members.eisbratislava.org/2023/09/28/cultivating-commitment-the-key-to-student-success>

Character.org. (2023, June 19). Four ways to help students develop their commitment muscle. <https://character.org/four-ways-to-help-students-develop-their-commitment-muscle/>

Drew, C. (2023, July 7). 31 commitment examples. Helpful Professor. <https://helpfulprofessor.com/commitment-examples/>

Janowiak, A. (2018, July 23). Teaching commitment: Facts about commitments. The Conover Company. <https://www.conovercompany.com/teaching-commitment-facts-about-commitments/>

National Society of Leadership and Success. (2018, May 3). 4 steps to unshakeable commitment with any goal. <https://www.nsls.org/blog/steps-unshakeable-commitment-any-goal>

Scullion, S. (2025, April 29). Four ways to teach your children commitment. Hearts + Minds. <https://www.hearts-minds.ie/home/four-ways-to-teach-your-children-commitment>

Vidak-Benjamin, E. (2016, April 10). Commitment: The college epidemic. The Orion. <https://theorion.com/55534/opinion/commitment-the-college-epidemic/>

TEACH YOU A LESSON:

Binge-Worthy Stories, Life-Worthy Lesson

Shailey Anne N. Marasigan

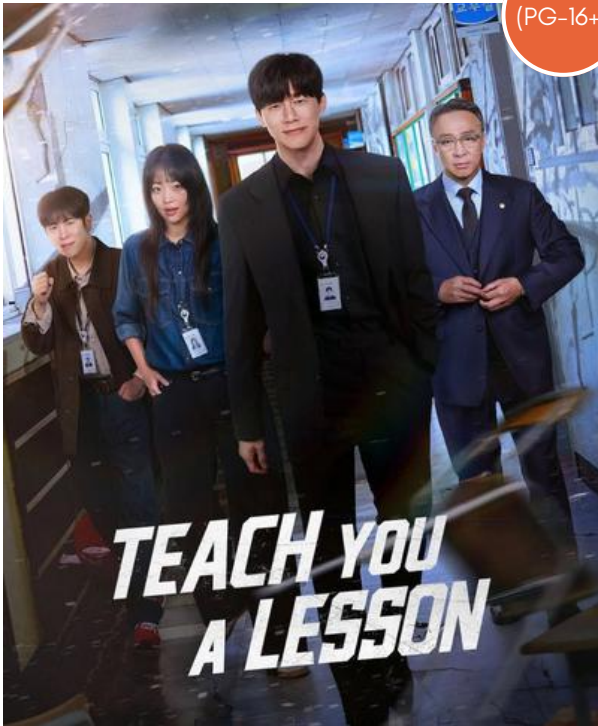


Photo courtesy of Netflix

What if the people who are supposed to teach the lessons also have a few lessons of their own?

The Korean drama ***“Teach You a Lesson”*** takes viewers into the messy realities of school life: bullying, abuse, disrespect, power struggles, and the complicated relationships between students and teachers.

Sometimes, students hurt others. Sometimes, students are the ones being hurt. And sometimes, teachers find themselves on the receiving end, too.

That’s what makes the series worth discussing.

It’s Not Always *“Bad Student vs. Good Teacher”*

One thing the series gets right is that people cannot always be placed neatly into boxes.

Students can be victims. They can also make harmful choices. Teachers can be supportive mentors, but they can also make mistakes. And yes, teachers can become victims of disrespect, manipulation, and abuse too.





For students, one important takeaway is accountability. Being young doesn't mean our actions don't have consequences. A "joke," rumor, threat, or humiliating post can affect someone far longer than we realize.

But accountability goes both ways.

Teachers and school personnel also have a responsibility to use their authority wisely. Being in a position of power means having the responsibility to set boundaries, listen, and treat students with dignity.

Teachers Are People, Too

Teachers often appear to be the ones in control: they lead the class, enforce rules, and give grades. But behind the authority is a person who can also feel stressed, embarrassed, exhausted, or even afraid.

Respect should never be a one-way street.

A healthy classroom isn't built on students fearing their teacher or teachers fearing their students. It is built on mutual respect, clear boundaries, and accountability.

And while teachers deserve respect, educators also need to remember that **discipline is meant to teach, not humiliate.**

There is a difference between discipline and humiliation, authority and intimidation, correction and punishment.

Sometimes, a student who is acting out needs consequences. Sometimes, they also need someone to ask, "Are you okay? What's really going on?"



Does Violence Really Teach a Lesson?

This is where the series gets especially complicated. Some scenes may make viewers feel that someone “*finally got what they deserved.*” But satisfying revenge isn’t always the same as meaningful justice.

Violence might stop a problem in the moment, but it doesn’t automatically teach empathy, accountability, or change. In real school communities, responding to harm with more harm can simply continue the cycle.

So instead of asking: “*How should we punish them?*” Perhaps we should also ask: “*What does real accountability look like?*” It can mean consequences, but also safety, support, reflection, and the chance to do better.

Students benefit most when parents, teachers, and the people around them work together rather than pointing fingers.

THE REAL LESSON

Teach You a Lesson may be uncomfortable and that's part of what makes it interesting.

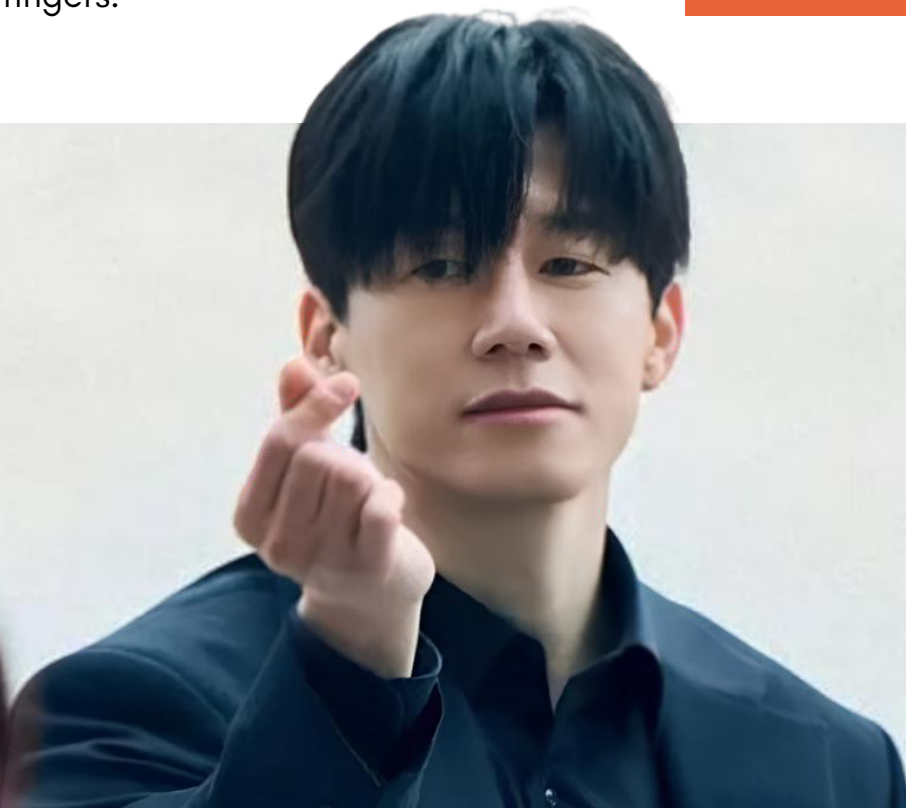
Its stories remind us that schools aren't just places where students learn from teachers. They are communities where everyone influences everyone else.

Students learn respect and accountability.

Teachers learn empathy and responsible use of authority.

Parents learn the value of listening.

And schools continue learning how to create spaces where both students and educators feel safe, respected, and heard. Because at the end of the day, education isn't just about teaching someone a lesson. Sometimes, it's about realizing that we all have one to learn.



Movie Recommendations for Kids and Teens



CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY

Maturity Rating: PG
Genre: Musical, Fantasy, Comedy, Family
Core Value: Integrity

2005



R. SEUSS' THE LORAX

Maturity Rating: PG
Genre: Musical, Fantasy, Comedy
Core Value: Environment-friendliness

2012



THE INTERN

Maturity Rating: PG-13
Genre: Comedy, Drama, Workplace
Core Value: Professionalism

2015



THE INCREDIBLES

Maturity Rating: PG
Genre: Musical, Fantasy, Comedy, Family
Core Value: Teamwork

2004



MOANA 1 & 2

Maturity Rating: PG
Genre: Musical, Fantasy, Comedy, Family
Core Values: Teamwork, Accountability, and Social and Moral Responsibility

2016
&
2024



UP

Maturity Rating: PG
Genre: Comedy, Drama, Adventure
Core Value: Commitment

2009



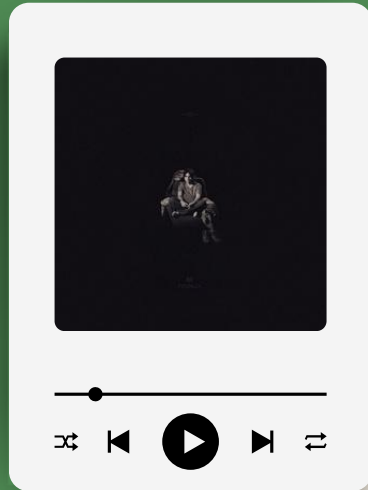
MEET THE ROBINSONS

Maturity Rating: G
Genre: Science Fiction, Comedy, Family
Core Values: Teamwork, Commitment, and Integrity

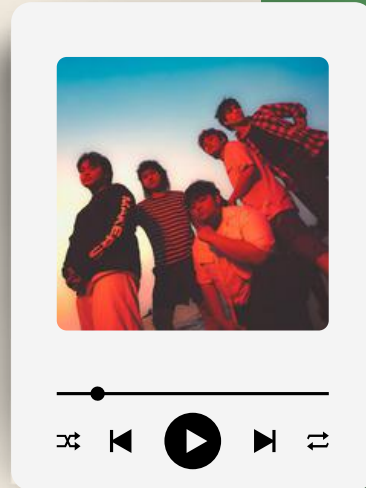
2007

Main Character Growth: Songs for Becoming the Person You're Meant to Be

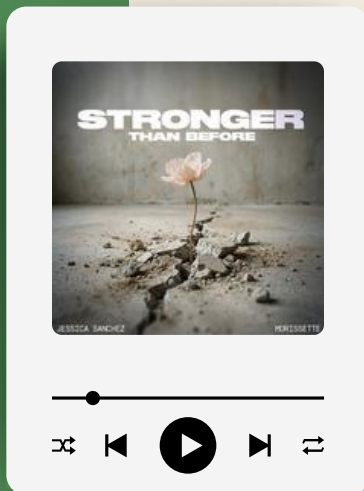
USAD
by
PABLO



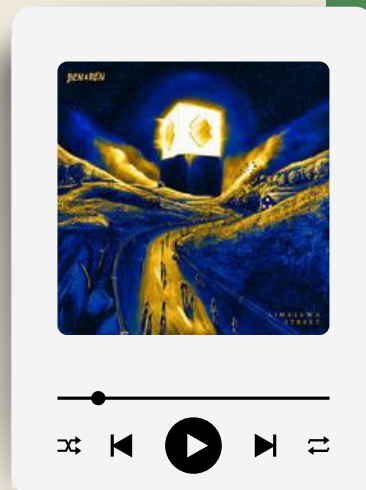
Isang Daan
by
Cup of Joe



Stronger
Than Before
by
Jessica
Sanchez &
Morissette



Roots
by
Ben & Ben



Every main character has a growth arc—and yours is no different.

This playlist captures the soundtrack of becoming: moving forward with "USAD," bouncing back with "Stronger Than Before," finding your direction through "Isang Daan," and staying grounded with "Roots."

Because growth isn't about having everything figured out. It's about taking the next step, learning along the way, and becoming more of who you're meant to be.

Press the song cover photo to play. Your character development starts here.

Supervising Editor

Ma. Gracia M. Gallardo-Gonzales

Editor-in-Chief

Ma. Lihra M. Daza

Layout Artist

Shailey Anne N. Marasigan

Contributors

Ma. Gracia M. Gallardo-Gonzales

Ann Joizelle D. Enverzo

Dianne G. Rodriguez

Ma. Lihra M. Daza

Maxine B. De Luna-Narito

Anne Camille D. Mercado

Angelito B. Clavero II

John David D. Albay

Araceli D.G. Deang

Alyza Sien S. Espiritu

Shailey Anne N. Marasigan

Rhian Angela A. Encomienda

Shawn Nicollei S. Felipe

Consultant

Dr. Justine Alexander C. Balcoba



The Guidance, Counseling and Career Services Office is open from:

Mondays to Fridays

8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.



Ground Floor, SFC building, University of the East, Manila
2219 C.M. Recto Avenue, Manila