**Tell a story from your life, describing an experience that either demonstrates your character or helped to shape it. (650 words)**

Tie, check. Vest, check. Hair, check.

I dawdled in front of the mirror, tidying up my appearance to disguise my disheveled mind. On my way from the bathroom, my strides were getting slower as I headed nearer to the meeting room.

Despite having numerous thoughts hanging in my mind, I put on a smile and greeted each member of the student council. It was just a week before Art, Charity, and Sports Week, a fundraiser that I had initiated, and we were having a regular check-in meeting.

Each department leader presented their progress, but my eyes were glued to my phone waiting for a notification. As president of the student council, I was in charge of finding tenants for the bazaar. The most highly requested tenant, who planned to open a stand in the bazaar, had been unreachable: I had left 12 unread messages and 5 missed calls. I wanted to talk about this in the meeting, but decided otherwise since I knew others were busy preparing the parts they were in charge of, and I assumed that talking about this would just burden them.

Days went by and the bazaar stands were being prepared. However, the tenant still could not be contacted. I was getting frustrated as there were only 3 days left, so it would be hard to make a deal with another tenant. Since it was the most expected tenant, without them, the amount of money generated would not be able to cover the event necessities’ and there would not be any fundraising and charity. This means that there would be no donation as well, which was the whole point of the event.

During group fellowship, noticing the frustration on my face, my mentor, who is also a youth leader at my church, came up to check on me. At first, I was reluctant to tell him because I assumed he would not understand the situation and would think that it was just a minor issue. Guess he knew that I was reluctant, so he started by telling off his journey on leading the youth ministry at church as well as the struggles he faced when a party canceled a sponsorship for the annual youth event. As soon as he finished his story, I felt understood and the story about the struggles I was dealing with just naturally came out of my mouth. After I finished telling my story, I was expecting to be given paragraphs of advice or tips and tricks. However, his response caught me off guard.

“A leader should be HOT: Humble, Open, and Transparent.”

What a frivolous abbreviation! Initially, I denied his advice since I thought it was contradictory to the image of a leader that the society had taught me. However, he reminded me that being open to the core team members would allow them to look at a bigger picture, which helps a lot in finding the middle ground of the struggle I was facing.

I immediately texted the student council to set off a meeting, where I decided to be open about my struggle with the tenant. Fortunately, they were all very understanding, so they immediately tried to contact food stalls located nearby. Then, one of the head departments told me that her relative just opened a beverage franchise near our school and was looking for an opportunity to join the bazaar. Without thinking twice, I asked for her relative’s contact and as expected, they were willing to open a stand in the bazaar.

Overall, the bazaar was successful, the tenant specifically was in great demand as they sold more than 60 cups of Thai milk tea and green tea. As a result, we managed to raise a total of IDR 2 million for an orphanage and ACSW has been annually conducted ever since then. Personally, for me the whole process was a roller coaster of emotions, from overthinking, stressing out, and feeling relieved. Despite all that, I learned to be more grateful about my team members, who have been rooting for me throughout the process.

This experience made me realize the importance for a leader to be open and transparent throughout their leadership process. That leadership is not just about highlighting the victories and trying to be a frontline when problems come, but also about the humility to be open by letting my team members know everything since they have the right to know about what is going on. Because after all, team members are not just pawns, but also co-contributors. Thus, with this realization, I look forward to continuing becoming a composed leader in university by taking leadership roles on projects or events, with an aim to maintain supportive team cooperation by creating a safe place for the whole team as we strive together through the highs and lows.