“I quit.” Said someone in the discord server, his profile pic turned into dark, and soon disappeared from the discord server. I sense of weakness surrounded me. I closed my computer and looked around at the empty meeting room. Now we have only half of the teammates left, and we are only 5 hours to due.

It all went back to February, 2023. I attended a space city design competition held by NASA. Our team managed to get to the Asian Region Final, when our team suddenly broke apart by no reason. I have no choice but join another team, with the help of the official managers. We have 48 hours to complete our task, which was to design a spaceport that is located at the third Lagrange point. I was elected to be the group leader of the automatic group. The first few hours were fine, everything was on track, but when I tried to contact our team leader, which was in another city(重庆), We all lost connection with the team leader. What’s worse, we soon found out that not only have we lost connection to the leader, we have lost connection with all the teammates in the leader’s team(They did not show up until the end of the 48 hours). The team went into chaos: Some of our teammates thought we’re done, and have given up. Others, although did not say anything, were also depressed. We asked our CO-CEO(就是那个比赛里面算一个带队的，上一届的冠军队伍队员) for further instructions, and she said we should reelect a team leader. Luckily enough, I was elected to be the team leader, and I soon found out that the team was at the edge of collapsing.

This is the first time to lead a team in my life. I soon found out that leading a team is not that easy as it seems. Since we have already lost 1/4 of a team, now every remaining teammate have to split the work from the ones that have lost connection. Everyone around me were complaining, and some of them have already given up. Some of them have already began arguing. I started to come up with ideas to stop arguing, but the only thing I had come up with was to shout “Stop!” as loudly as I could. After the arguing finally died out, it was already 2 AM in the morning. I sent everyone back to their hotel to sleep, except the two remaining group leaders and our CO-CEO.

“Alright,” I said, “as we know, we are facing a serious decision. The burden of the quitted team have left on us.” I signed and continued. “I assume that we will work as one to overcome this.” Just as I was about to bring out my plan when suddenly a voice came out of the voice chat:”We quit.”

“What?” I said, “We still have chance of winning!” “No.” Siad the leader of another group, “My group will quit, all of our team.” I felt like a lightning had stroke me right on my head. If we still have chance of winning with 3 groups, now it is impossible for us to win with only half of the whole team. I watched as the profile disconnected, turned into gray, and at last, disappeared. Now the team really collapsed.

I sat there in the silence of the empty room, feeling the weight of the situation crushing down on me. The sense of responsibility as a leader overwhelmed my thoughts. The pressure was suffocating. I looked at the designs, the plans, the dreams we had woven into our project. All of it seemed to fade away in the face of the harsh reality. I felt like I was drowning in despair.

But then, amidst the darkness of my thoughts, a flicker of determination sparked within me. I remembered the faces of my teammates, their initial enthusiasm, and their trust in me. I thought about the hours we had spent brainstorming, the laughter we had shared, and the challenges we had overcome together. I couldn't let all of that go to waste.

I wiped away my tears, took a deep breath, and stood up. The room might have been empty physically, but in my mind, it was filled with the echoes of my teammates' voices, their hopes, and their expectations. I knew I couldn't give up. I couldn't let their belief in me crumble.

I reopened my laptop and re-entered the discord server. The first thing I did was to address the remaining members of my team. "I know things seem dire right now," I typed, my fingers flying across the keyboard, "but we can't afford to quit. We might be down, but we're not out. We have thirty hours left, and we can still make a difference. Let's pull ourselves together and finish what we started. We owe it to ourselves, to our teammates who had to leave, and to the spirit of this competition. Are anyone with me?"

One by one, responses started to appear on the screen, messages of determination and commitment. It was like a tiny spark that slowly grew into a blazing fire. Our remaining teammates rallied together, each one bringing their unique skills and ideas to the table. The atmosphere in the discord server shifted from despair to determination.

For the next few hours, we worked tirelessly. Ideas flowed freely, and collaboration became seamless. We faced numerous challenges, but we tackled them head-on. We divided tasks, allocated responsibilities, and supported each other every step of the way. The initial gloom was replaced by a sense of camaraderie and shared purpose.

As the clock ticked away, we refined our designs, polished our presentation, and prepared ourselves mentally for the final submission. Despite the odds, we managed to create something extraordinary. A spaceport design that was not just functional but innovative, sustainable, and inspiring.

When the submission time arrived, we hit the button with a mixture of exhaustion and pride. We might not have the full team we started with, but we had given it our all. Our project was a testament to our resilience, creativity, and teamwork.

In the end, we didn't win the competition, but that didn't matter anymore. What mattered was that we had persevered, learned, and grown stronger together. The experience had transformed us, turning a group of strangers into a tight-knit team bonded by a shared journey.

As I shut down my computer, I felt a sense of fulfillment wash over me. The room was still empty, but it was no longer a void. It was a space filled with memories of struggle and triumph, of tears shed and laughter shared. And in that moment, I realized that even in the face of adversity, the human spirit could shine brightly, illuminating the path forward with unwavering determination.