DISCUSS AN ACCOMPLISHMENT, EVENT, OR REALIZATION THAT SPARKED A PERIOD OF PERSONAL GROWTH AND A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF YOURSELF OR OTHERS.

“People are going to die before you get it perfect!” my dad exclaimed. In a snap, my facial expression turned from curious eyes looking at the ceiling – chewing my baked cookie in a quest to find the ‘golden treasure’ – into frowned eyebrows sticking down because of the disappointing words my dad spat out. I needed to find this ‘treasure’ to bring purpose to my project. Indeed, I was a perfectionist wanting my non-profit baking venture to succeed in the palm of my hands.

Coming from a renowned family bakery in my hometown, I especially aspire to be like my grandmother who discovered her own family heirloom recipe. As a self-driven project to carry out my own accomplishment and not of others, I didn’t want to just blatantly follow her recipe. Despite having been in the baking business forever now, I was still struggling to perfect my own, signature pastry – one that would win the hearts of my hometown people. From failed croissant-like cinnamon rolls turned into muddy chocolate like the movie Matilda to the endless evenings I would go online scouring cooking videos and recipes, my dad realized that not only was I stuck with the recipe, but also that my non-profit was not moving at all.

Having already scarred me with that rhetorical thwart of his, he further deepened the wound by slyly suggesting me to just use one of my aunt’s recipes and admit defeat. Wasn’t exactly sure as to what or who made my ego flew away till I said, “fine.” I was surprised by how magically delicious yet simple they were to make; it was perfect, other than the fact that it wasn’t mine. With execution day getting closer and closer down the pipeline, I was fixated with an uneasy solution. As I heavily walked into my aunt’s premises asking for her permission, she tenderly nodded with a solid approval in her eyes, actually wanting her niece to bring forth the legacy to a wider customer segment.

Evenings after school, I would walk on the usual silver pavements in front of my dad’s workplace where I would make my cookies at. ‘Tis was the golden hour – the blazing orange hue of the sunset dawning my walk. A bag of chocolate chip and oatmeal raisin cookies tugged into a zip lock swayed down the pavement, a deluxe sampler I was about to devour until I locked glance with a lady. She seemed homeless, sitting on the floor under the shadowy façade as her weary eyes and posture appeared to have pushed the sun completely out of sight. Almost immediately triggered by the strong conviction, I passed onto her the bag of cookies I was tightly clenching on.

Perfection, I finally felt after a seemingly very long time.

Warmth gushed through my veins as I vividly caught this glimpse of happiness in her as she cracked the tiniest bit of a smile for me. Thanks to her, I was slammed back to ground zero and reminded as to why I wanted to establish my venture in the first place. Yet it was ultimately a form of self-improvement too, a switch from my unhealthy perfectionist side to one that is mature and respects the boundaries of time and resources. At the end of the day, I wouldn’t have been able to share the special moment with that lady if it wasn’t for my dad.

It took me a strenuous process of throwing out that ego to be able to account in that lady’s happiness into the equation: my ‘golden treasure.’ People’s smile as they take a bite out of my pastry should be the goal, not necessarily how “original” the recipe is. A smile that can’t wait for tomorrow is the heritage I’d like to bring; thus the recipe of “share a smile” became a staple for my non-profit project, Beari Hungri.

*Hi Audrey!*

*I really like how you opened yourself up to your vulnerable train of thoughts as you journeyed through your non-profit, Beari Hungri. I really think it adds in that depth and richness to your response, so kudos to that.*

*I do however think that your sentence structuring inhibited the emotional flow of your piece in some parts, so I helped you out on that little bit. A solid essay otherwise, keep up the good work!*

*- Matthew*