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 altered from curious eyes looking at the screen desperately, for an answer to my quest of finding the “gold treasure”, into frowned eyebrows sticking down as my whole face sunk because of the disappointing words my dad spat out that hurt my motivation. I needed to find this “gold treasure” to bring purpose to my project. Indeed, I am a perfectionist wanting to do things correctly, considering the most particular details to ensure I could be the best of the best.

His words followed after months of developing the perfect recipe for my non-profit baking project. In spite of having years of baking experience, I was struggling to create my original pastry to impress my community, hence my “gold treasure”. Failed croissant-like cinnamon rolls turned into muddy chocolate from the movie Matilda into endless evenings of scouring cooking videos and websites. I wasn’t getting any closer to satisfying anyone’s sweet tooth than I thought.

Coming from a background of a renowned family bakery in my hometown, I especially aspired 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 use my family’s recipe, no matter how long it takes. In retrospect, it might have been my dad realizing that not only was I stuck with the recipe, but also seeing the non-profit project not moving at all, that prompted him to suggest using one of my aunt’s recipes. But at the time, I was angered by the idea. “Fine!”, I muttered grumpily from his futile suggestions. I finally tried making my aunt’s cookies. I was surprised how delicious, timely mannered, and simple they were. It was perfect, other than the fact that it wasn’t mine.

Desperate for time and having no progress at all, I am fixated with this fact. I just wanted this problem to be over and decided to take the realistic solution instead, baking those cookies. “Is it truly fine to use your recipe?” With tender and assuring words, my aunt said “Of course!”

Exhausted on the first day as I walk on the usual silver pavements in front of my dad’s workplace where I spent the whole day making cookies. A bag of chocolate chip and oatmeal raisin cookies gripped on the palm of my hands, I was hoping to enjoy after a long tough day. I first realized the lady. She was a homeless lady sitting on the floor looking down as her sadness seamlessly complemented the dark pavements. Her existence seemed to have merged with the wall, allowing people to easily ignore her. Started with a strong conviction which drowned my doubts, I gave her the bag of cookies I was clutching. I experienced a new kind of satisfaction knowing that this purpose I want to bring to my platform is not only a so-called “project”, but it is a start of self-improvement. This accomplishment as I reflect back, her happiness and myself bringing out that purpose came from being quick-witted in my actions previously. The cookies wouldn't be in the palm of my hands if it wasn’t for my dad’s words.

I realized: that lady’s happiness was my “gold treasure”. People’s smile as they take a bite out of my pastry should be the goal, not how original the recipe is. A smile that can’t wait for tomorrow is the heritage I want to bring. Letting my stubborn perfectionist nature be secondary is worth the smiles as I look back and look forward to. Ironically, as I swallowed my dignity, I was able to be proud of my project. A recipe of “share a smile” became my staple recipe for my non-profit project called Beari Hungri.