

The farmers market had finally begun.

As the horde of kids entered the school room, I dug my hand into my pockets and pulled out my hard-earned cash. Frantically scanning each vendor, my eyes locked onto the treasure – Ms. Hoang and her apples. I hurried my short six-year-old legs towards the mob who were bombarding the teacher.

Eventually making it to the front, I slammed the monopoly money against the table and left with ten fresh apples in my bag along with my empty Spiderman wallet. After that single transaction, I began heading towards the exit.

In the hallway, I rushed towards my mom and excitedly showed her my spoils of war.

“Look at what I have! We can have ten yummy apples for dinner-,” I managed to suggest before being scolded.

“WHY DIDN’T YOU LISTEN TO ME? I TOLD YOU TO GET BOK CHOY AND CARROTS!”

As my mom continues to ramble on about obedience, I begin to salivate about the sweet and juicy sensation from the fruit.

Later that night, we sliced open the apple and began enjoying its flavor. In the moment, I had proved her wrong – by following my intuition, it led to a positive experience for her and I. Being so young, never have I made my own decisions. At the age of six, I began to fall in love with the farmers market at my elementary school.

While I ate the rest of the apples that week, I discovered more about myself from that event. Taking the next step forward, I had a clearer lifelong objective – the aspiration to love your work, while having it impact others. However, I must prioritize my own passions and interests rather than the opinions and negative stigma behind it, just like I did with the apple.

John Li
Personal Statement

The value pushes me towards the S.T.E.M field, with my first step of joining a robotics team, where I was heavily discouraged because it ‘looked’ bad. Opportunities in S.T.E.M are extremely limited, and thus I knew I had to capitalize on it. I entered with no prior knowledge but was determined to learn. Through that one season, I accomplished more than I’d ever expect – successfully learned how to program a robot (luckily without hurting anyone along the way), competing at a district and national level. I cherish and value every second spent with this team, which wouldn’t have been possible if I had chosen the path of the carrot.

The farmers market didn’t end at elementary school, but has manifested in my life – personal hobbies, paving my career, giving me a reason to get out of bed. The lesson from that memorable day has been guiding me through the dark, to eventually reach my lifelong goal. Each day that passes by, I follow and pick out the apples, even if it will result in a brutal scolding.