When I was younger, I used to confabulate with my father about that naïve but intense eager to “change the world” as any other inspired child, and as a reaction, he used reply: “but son, what kind of change do you actually intend to perform? Hitler also changed the world, perhaps in an absolutely distorted and appalling way, yet he did it. Change is about quality, not quantity or amount; it’s about the purpose of the one who performs it.” I had always seen my father as a sort of oracle of wisdom, which I could constantly access. Simply put, those words couldn’t mean anything less than the world to me, and although I couldn’t completely understand them, I knew someday they would be truly useful. Each of those words meant something. “Not about quantity, but about quality”, he said. They just kept echoing inside my mind for a long time.

As time passed, the regular life experiences of any normal adolescent’s reality went through mine. Happiness, sadness, stress, all those sensations confusedly combined with 6 daily hours of classes and intense learning kind of kept my ambition of changing the world in my subconscious. It was on a dreadful morning, though that I talked to one of my best friends, Gabriela, at my school and received some distressing news. An old chemistry teacher of ours started passing through some tough time as he discovered his wife had lupus. However, it didn’t take so long for him to start struggling with his expenses because of the costly treatment, coming at the point where he didn’t even have money to buy his son’s clothes. It was a particular impact for me since myself, Gabriela and some other close friends had an intimate relation with both him and his wife. We attended their home several times and even went to church together. That news affected all of us in some way.

During the days that came, we went to his home, talked to his wife, prayed with them and shared the feelings we were all having. Perhaps confusion, powerlessness and a bit of vulnerability could best describe what was happening to our minds. After that, I became absolutely restless. Days passed and I was still experiencing that, it was the moment when I decided I simply couldn’t stand it anymore. I went directly to Gabi, that was feeling just the same and we started to orchestrate the plan to help João Batista. A few days later we started to put our plan into action. We talked to several friends and started to raises funds at the school, began selling raffles and articulated with our teachers a plan to provide several lectures in theatres in order to raise all the money we could. As a result, the campaign started to spread through the whole city and a great deal of teachers from other schools began to contribute with us. Just a few days later, we finally achieved our goal.

Although we had already collected the amount we needed, our mission still wasn’t over. It was the moment to handle him the money. In order to do that, our group talked to the school’s principal and planned a special moment to do so. When the time came, all students gathered at the school’s courtyard. It was incredible how I couldn’t identify where that crowd ended. A bit later, João joined us and was caught in surprise by that incredible scene. Nevertheless, tears slowly began to slid down his face, as if he had a world upon his shoulders, and all of that had suddenly disappeared. That feeling of relief seemed to enfold his whole body as he remembered that all his debts would be payed, all his wife’s medicines would be bought and all his son’s clothes would no longer miss and that every single moment of peace that was stolen from him, all of a sudden had reappeared as a beacon of light in a dark night. And so, those tears touched every single one that shared that moment. The same precise and simple moment, when my father's words hit me in the face like a punch, the moment I realized it wasn't about changing the whole world, wasn't about leaving a legacy neither having your name written in a history's book. It was about doing what it's right. Not about how much it meant to the world, but rather if it meant the world to me. “Quality, not quantity”, he said.