

# DIN TAI FUNG

*100 lessons beyond dining*



*written by*

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***The next best thing to eating great foods is  
writing the experience about it.***



I dedicate this book to my former boss,  
*Mr. Simon Han.*

*Photo: Celebrating New Year's Eve 2019 at Han Shi Fu restaurant in Deira, Dubai, with Boss Simon and his son, Solo. Photo taken by Flor Tuñacao, a DTF body masseuse.*

## ***Author's Note***

### My First Din Tai Fung Meal

The day I was hired at Din Tai Fung restaurant, I couldn't wait to visit the dining hall and experience it as if I were just another customer. What unfolded that day left me with lasting takeaways that go beyond food:

#### *Attention to Detail*

It's the little things that make a big difference. At Din Tai Fung, I noticed how they greeted me, the cleanliness of the space, and the beautiful presentation of each dish. These seemingly small details combined to create an unforgettable experience. In any job, paying attention to the small things can make your work come alive and positively resonate with your colleagues.

#### *Hospitality Matters*

The warmth and care I felt from the staff greatly impacted my overall experience. Whether in a restaurant or any other environment, offering hospitality and genuine service can go a long way in creating a positive atmosphere for everyone involved.

#### *Share the Joy*

Just as my experience at Din Tai Fung inspired me to write, remember that sharing the joy of good food or any positive experience can brighten someone else's day. Whether through writing or simply recommending a great restaurant to a friend, spreading positivity can have a ripple effect on others.

#### *Be Open to New Experiences*

Trying new dishes can open your eyes to different flavors and ways of dining. Similarly, being open-minded and willing to explore new experiences in life can lead to wonderful discoveries that enrich your personal and professional life.

*My visit to Din Tai Fung at the Mall of the Emirates in Dubai was more than just a meal—it was an enriching experience that left me feeling inspired and happy. I carry that feeling into my writing and my interactions with others, spreading joy and positivity wherever I go. So, here's to embracing culinary adventures and savoring the delightful moments Din Tai Fung has to offer*

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Xie Xie Din Tai Fung Restaurant!

## *Lesson 1*

# **Hello Welcome Ni Hao!**

Upon my temporary engagement as a Din Tai Fung Good Friend, responsible for arranging plates, glasses, tea cups, knives, soup spoons, silverware, and appointed to the Dubai Mall branch during the pandemic, I was intrigued by the significance of Din Tai Fung's signature greetings:

"Hello, Welcome, Ni Hao!"

While going about my duties, I pondered the reason behind the consistent use of these greetings by DTF servers, particularly those in the front-of-house, who greet every incoming guest with them. At times, the staffs may greet the guests together or individually. Is this greeting a form of compliment, etiquette, or simply a customer service practice?

On my first day of employment at DTF restaurant, I found myself pondering a particular question. I initially viewed the simple act of kindness displayed by the staff as a mere formality, a task to be completed upon the arrival of each customer.

As DTF employees, I perceived it as their obligation to express well wishes of happiness and prosperity. I also believed this courtesy would merely extend to the entrance of the establishment, solely for generating a welcoming atmosphere.

With the passage of time, I learned to utter the signature greetings - 'Hello', 'Welcome', and 'Ni Hao!' (Ni Hao, in Chinese, translates to 'Are you good?') - like my colleagues. Only then did I realize that this gesture is a means of making DTF's guests feel valued, great, and special.

## *Lesson 2*

# **Failure Is Opportunity**

When things go wrong, I have learned to ask myself, "Where is the opportunity here? How to improve myself out of this failure?"

I am always hopeful that even in difficult situations, there is always an opportunity to learn and grow. This optimism was instilled in me by our DTF managers and team leaders. Rather than seeing setbacks, customer complaints and missed deadlines as failures, they view them as opportunities for development and improvement.



### *Lesson 3*

## **Staffs Massage**

I am thrilled to share with you the amazing perk offered at DTF - complimentary massages for all staff members! It's rare to find a company that prioritizes the well-being of its employees in such a meaningful way. I know it based on my experience and my experience is based on the fact, that only DTF company gives massage to its employees for free. (By the way, I've been working in Dubai for 15 years. The six of those years spent at DTF, and still I keep it going).

DTF understands that a healthy staff is crucial to maintaining high productivity levels reducing tardiness and avoiding absences. As yours truly who helps maintain the health of DTF staff, I feel privileged to contribute to their overall well-being.

Let's take a moment to relax and enjoy the healing power of touch. So take a seat in our comfortable massage chairs and let me work out those work-related aches and pains while you take a deep breath and let go of any stress.

Remember, massaging DTF staff is vital to promoting overall health and stress relief.

*Having a quick back massage during break time is better than a puff of cigarettes or a cup of coffee.*

## **Positive Approach Towards Lockdown**

When my boss informed me about the loss of my job due to the pandemic, I felt a great deal of sadness. Although I had anticipated this outcome, it was still a painful experience, especially considering the difficulties of job loss abroad.

Thankfully, the DTF offers free accommodation, foods and essential grocery items for staff members affected by this kind of hardship. From Burj Khalifa residence, I promptly relocated to the company accommodations and spent a year there and more, which I referred to as my library cell. I was living with individuals from four different nationalities including Pakistan, India, Myanmar, and Egypt.

Although I struggled with depression during this time, it ultimately led to a positive transformation in my life. Instead of dwelling on the negative, I focused on utilizing my time productively and ended up writing two books, one novel and one poetry collection, in our local dialect, Cebuano.

This experience taught me that even during times of misfortune, there is always a treasure waiting to be discovered if we approach it with a positive mindset.

## Lesson 5

### Three Types of DTF Employees

I've been fortunate enough to work with three types of employees at DTF, each with their unique motivations and approaches to their work.

The first group that stands out is ***the passionate*** employees - these individuals truly love what they do and approach their jobs as more than just work. While salary is not their main driving force, they are incredibly motivated and can often work with little supervision. They are always looking for ways to improve and are enthusiastic team players who are truly committed to their causes. Even when faced with challenges, they remain focused on finding solutions. It's a pleasure to work alongside these dedicated individuals.

The second type of employees are those who are ***financially motivated***. They prioritize a fair salary and often ask about compensation before signing or renewing their contract. It's important to them to be fairly compensated for their work and without it, it may be difficult to attract or retain these employees.

Let's talk about the third group of employees, those who may ***not have a lot of options or no choice***, but to work to make ends meet. They may not love their job, but it's the best option they have right now. It's important to note that they are not being forced to work, but rather they simply don't have any other means of income. We should be understanding and supportive of these individuals and their situations.

Now, which of these three employee types do you think you are? The one who's passionate about the job, the one who's motivated by money, or the one who feels no choice?

I think I'm a mix of all three. I love what I do, whether it's massaging my coworkers or anyone else. Helping people feel their health better is pretty rewarding, even if there's no cash or tip involved. But, let's be real, money is a motivator for me. I need to pay the bills, you know? And finally, I feel like I have no choice but to stay here at DTF. I like the vibe and feel here like I'm part of the family. Plus, getting recognized for my hard work is pretty sweet.



## *Lesson 6*

# **Stay Calm When You're Panicking**

One of the most valuable lessons, or rather a skill, that I have acquired while working as a temporary member of the DTF restaurant crew, especially on weekends, is the art of remaining composed or calm in highly stressful situations. Or maintain composure during moments of panic.

As a lone Good Friend in charge of tasks that were previously handled by three to four DTF staff members in the pre-pandemic years, it is essential to stay calm and composed (note: if you lose your composure or easily agitated, you're freaking out).

I see developing the ability to remain calm as an incredibly valuable skill that all staff members should strive to acquire. It is a unique trait that we can pass on to our colleagues, enabling them to stay calm in even the most panicky situations. Although it may be difficult to apply, we are determined to practice it, even when controlling overwhelming emotions seems impossible.

Let's remember that when emotions run high, our level of intelligence tends to lower or decrease. And I must confess, I have fallen short in utilizing this valuable skill, both during my Good Friend DTF journey and in my daily life encounters. However, I continuously remind myself that when faced with tense situations, I can remain composed.

I am now thrilled that I can not only practice but also apply this trait in actual scenarios. For instance, picture a scene where everyone is filled with tension and panic, yet you alone manage to stay calm and rationally contemplate your next steps. That can do miracles because I've seen so many unnecessary issues blow up in restaurants due to people letting their emotions get in the way. So much petty or less important conflict over nothing, which could easily be resolved with a

simple handshake, wink of an eye, just showing a give way gesture, letting it go like your cheating Ex, or asking for forgiveness even if it's not your fault.

Sometimes emotions run high and these silly misunderstandings between colleagues turn into big problems that waste a ton of time and energy. It messes with the smooth functioning of the whole restaurant. But you know what? I'm grateful for those experiences because if I can handle them with practice, it's like performing as I said, a miracle. And maybe, just maybe, I can even inspire my colleagues to do the same. I know it's tough, but I want to give it a shot.

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*One cheery advice to have chilling emotions, would be to embrace the moment and take things slow. Enjoy every step along your journey and try not to put too much pressure about where you'll find yourself a decade later. Life is full of delightful surprises, so let go of those worries and savor the present!*

## Covid-19 Patience

As a COVID-19 victim (not by virus *per se*, thankfully I remained negative throughout the pandemic), I have experienced the difficulties that come with a pandemic. It had resulted in millions of job losses, including my own. Despite losing my work, I was so determined to survive.

Therefore, I took up a position as a Good Friend staff (to set up every section of the restaurant by putting silverware etc...) at the DTF Dubai Mall branch. While I no longer massage the tired bodies of my colleagues, I now push the restaurant trolley.

The food industry was deemed essential during the pandemic, so thankfully it remained open. I must admit that working in a restaurant was tough, but it reminded me of the strength of an ant, which is considered the strongest animal in the world, but can be able to lift weights disproportionate to its tiny size.

For almost two years, I had been like a human-sized ant, patiently lifting weights and navigating the restaurant with diligence. I had to work on my patience to keep my hard-head temper under control, especially on busy weekends when servers made demanding calls for assistance.

Through patience, I was able to approach my tasks without confusion or stress. Instead of rushing to complete them, I took the time to consider the best way to proceed, whether that be changing the garbage bin or filing supplies.

I was mindful of my dishwasher colleagues, and show respect for their work by patiently waiting my turn to wash my requested dishes. I also understand the importance of safety, taking care to push trolleys carefully in order to avoid accidents. Patience is a valuable trait, and I strive to cultivate it in all aspects of my work.

By practicing patience while driving, even with a trolley full of silverware and garbage, I was able to maintain a clear state of mind. This calmness helps ensure that everything gets to its destination safely - whether it's me behind the trolley wheels or my career goals.

## *Lesson 8*

### **Good Friend on The Way**

I remember feeling overwhelmed on the first day of my challenge, but I remained optimistic about my ability to survive. I knew that I needed to be strong, even when my body felt exhausted.

Instead of letting negative thoughts take over, I used my noon break to meditate and reflect on the self-help book I had read. It taught me the power of positive thinking and how to overcome mental barriers. With this newfound knowledge, I created a positive mindset and set out to take on each day one step at a time. This breakthrough has become a major turning point in my life.

After a refreshing noon break, Good Friend was re-energized and eager to jump back into the battle. With a positive mindset, I confidently grabbed my trolley and pressed the walkie-talkie, announcing to the section leaders,

"Good news everyone! Good Friend is on his way!"

Their response was quick and enthusiastic,

"Copy that, copy that! Good Friend, we hear you loud and clear, and we can't wait to have you back!"

## *Art On The Wall*

While pushing the trolley, I passed through art on the restaurant wall. And I ask myself, 'Are paintings on the wall at DTF restaurant simply for decorative purposes? Or it has a deeper meaning than that'.

I believe these framed pieces of artwork are not just to beautify the corner, to fill up the empty space of the side wall, and to extend the shop concept.

Paintings on the restaurant are a powerful aid to mental imaging, a positive state that adds appetite and uplifts good mood to both wait staff and diners.

I have confirmed how hanging paintings drives tension out. Every time I look it up as I pass by while pushing my Good Friend trolley, I sense quietness, beauty, and order.

Quiet as a mirror reflecting the habit of exercising gratitude. The beauty of putting life in order, like how paintings orderly hanging up reminded me not to be a victim of the "taken for granted" habit.

Paintings remind me not to fail to properly appreciate something or someone, especially as a result of overfamiliarity. Never disregard its immense value while it is with you. (Because by human nature, we only see things valuable when it is gone).

But, who can afford to "take for granted" the DTF paintings, my hanging look out of all my endeavors (specifically during the pandemic).

## Lesson 9

### **What Is Leadership?**

*While I was rubbing Mr Milver V's tired back at the CPRG office after his week-long trip in Europe, he asked me, 'Rommel, what's leadership?' So I took an hour to jot down my thoughts and this is what I came up with:*

I'm really curious about the concept of leadership and what it truly means to lead. It's such an amazing feeling to be led by someone who inspires you to strive for excellence. In my personal experience with DTF, I believe that a leader is someone who can effectively guide and motivate their team. A leader doesn't manipulate or coerce their members but rather inspires and positively influences them.

Great leaders are role models for their teams, and their members aspire to follow in their footsteps. You can tell a true leader by how their team responds to the tasks given. They don't just comply because they have to, or are afraid of salary deduction, but instead find joy in what they are doing.

Isn't it fascinating how those members strive to achieve their goals trust the process and are influenced by the authenticity of their leader? A true leader doesn't just manage the team to win objectives but incorporates it as a way of life. Leaders prioritize the people they serve. Equipping, empowering, and inspiring them. "I" and "my" become "We" and "Our" and "Let's". Without the team, a leader is nothing!

True leaders teach not to compete with others, but to compete with oneself. How to compete with oneself (yourself)? It's about improving your skills, your ability, and your mindset, and you perform well, better than yesterday. Thus, in this way, you can all lead a prosperous life by being a LEADER of your own self. (Also leadership is not just an impressive title embossed on your business card).

*"Leadership, as I have learned, should be approached with a focus on responsibilities rather than power. It entails a great deal of accountability and the ability to guide and serve others."*



## *Lesson 10*

### **Team Speaker**

I have had the privilege of attending multiple DTF team briefings, from which I have gained an abundance of insight. These meetings encompass far more than just the day-to-day requirements of the team, as I have also observed the efficient delivery of messages by team leaders, section supervisors, and DTF branch managers alike. I have found their candid approach to be particularly engaging.

Firstly, sincerity is the key to effective leadership, which is clearly conveyed through body language and the delivery of messages. Drama is absent.

Secondly, messages are delivered briefly, concisely, and precisely, directly from the heart and to the point.

Thirdly, eye contact is used effectively as it provides a transparent link between the speaker and listener.

Fourthly, the speakers are open to suggestions, which encourages staff to embrace their role as active contributors rather than mere listeners. In turn, staff are able to interact freely without encountering any shyness or awkwardness.

Lastly, the speakers have a good sense of humor, which is both refreshing and engaging.

## Hybrid Customers

*In the following, I would like to present the diverse guests that I have observed at Din Tai Fung restaurant, namely:*

a) ***Love At First Eat.***

Customers of high culinary discernment display authentic interest in the quality of food, including its aroma, color, presentation, and, most especially, taste. When they fall in love at first bite, the price of the menu becomes irrelevant as they will relish the experience time and time again.

b) ***V.I.P. TRIP-ment.***

These customers require additional care and attention. Acknowledgment and VIP treatment are of utmost importance to them as they are Good 'WILL' ambassadors. If attended to properly, they will bring with them a group of WELL-deserved individuals for a delightful dinner after a long day tour in Dubai.

c) ***Symbolic Dining.***

DTF is a destination for Symbolic Dining, a status associated with the brand and Instagram posts. Eating at fine dining or Michelin-star restaurants represents a milestone in their lives.

d) ***With Staff attached.***

Guests who frequent DTF, often develop a sense of connection with the restaurant staff, and this extends beyond simply enjoying the food and experience. Some of these guests are referred to DTF by

their friends or acquaintances who also appreciate the restaurant, while others are first-time visitors. Regardless of their status, these guests value their time spent at DTF and appreciate the care provided by the in-house staff.

e) ***Art-petite.***

Certain guests at DTF display a keen appreciation for the restaurant's design and physical structure. These individuals are deeply moved by both the exterior and interior aesthetics of the establishment and often display a renewed appetite as a result.

I have observed that these guests are especially curious about the details of the ceiling, logo, paintings, motifs, lighting, and flooring, and how these elements blend in harmony with the Taiwanese cuisine offered by DTF. To these guests, the restaurant is not only a culinary adventure but an artistic one as well.

f) ***The No Choice.***

No-choice customers are those who enter the DTF restaurant without any prior intention to dine there. They may have visited the mall for shopping or to meet someone and stumbled upon the restaurant by chance, particularly during meal times after long hours of grocery buying or window shopping. Due to time constraints, they do not have the opportunity to explore other dining options.

Despite their unintentional visit, they contribute significantly to the restaurant industry and are therefore highly valued. We appreciate the opportunity to learn how to treat them with the respect they deserve.

Regardless of which individuals comprise this group, I express my gratitude for the opportunity to learn how to treat them with fairness and equity.

## *Lesson 12*

### **Hardship Gives Courage**

I am excited to share with you a personal experience that profoundly impacted my perspective on true HARDSHIP. A couple of years ago, I found myself in a challenging situation after losing my massage job due to Covid-19. Despite feeling uncertain, I decided to take on a new role as a Good Friend crew member at the Dubai Mall branch.

The job was tough and initially left me feeling exhausted due to the large floor area and high foot traffic, but I remained Optimistic. Even though I considered quitting on the first day, I pushed through and committed to persevere.

This experience taught me that with determination and a positive attitude, we can overcome obstacles and come out stronger on the way!

### *Lesson 13*

## **The Ant-man On The Restaurant Floor**

I couldn't help but feel curious as I arrived at Dubai Mall DTF amidst the chaos of the pandemic. Instead of working as a body masseuse to my colleagues, I found myself pushing a restaurant trolley as a Good Friend staff member.

Despite the challenges of the food industry during COVID-19, the restaurant remained open. Although the job was tough, it reminded me of the strength of an **ant**. It can be able to lift weights disproportionate to its size.

Over the past two years, I have been an **ant man** weighing the value of patience to navigate the endless calls from busy servers and avoid any trolley "road rage". It's not always easy, but I know I must survive.

I can't help but feel curious, like ant too curious where the food smell comes from, mine about which section to refill first with supplies always running low.

When I exercise patience, my inner voice tends to hum the tune of 'Where Do I Begin' by Andy Williams in the karaoke version, and it helps me mentally prepare for my shift.

It's fascinating how patience softens my heart and eases the task competition dilemma such as which to prioritize first between changing

the garbage bin using the platform trolley or receiving logistic supplies and filing those heavy large boxes in the humid stock room.

Even when working with DTF dishwashers, patience helps to reduce the stress level that arises in making a suggestion, as to which supply to wash first, either the front of the house's dirty cutlery or the back kitchen with numerous utensils now filing up on the floor like a mountain. Those are goodly needed all together on busy hours restaurant operation.

I can't help but wonder how patience teaches me valuable lessons especially when our utensil massive washing machine shuts down and needs to undergo Dilbar repair and maintenance.

I've learned through patience how to push the trolley with utmost care to avoid any tile floor damage and friction, to avoid breaking the full-cover mirrored post at DTF Dubai Mall, to avoid hitting any customer's feet while dining, or accidentally bumping on glass door upon going in and out to Section F open dining hall.

Always inculcate in mind that negligence of duty can kill ant's mantra: Slowly but surely.

## *Lesson 14*

### **DTF Table, The Living Witness**

If only the DTF dining table could talk, it would have so many incredible and heart-warming meal-time stories to share. From family gatherings to catching up with old friends. From meet up business meetings to occasional solo date at night. Thus, every moment spent at the table is special.

While some tables may have seen their fair share of awkward moments, mine has been lucky enough to witness only the most wonderful experiences. And even during those times when I dined alone, I found solace and comfort in the tantalizing Taiwanese cuisine and the warm embrace of my trusty table.

As a bachelor-at-large in Dubai for almost a decade, I have learned to cherish these moments with myself, and I am grateful to my living witness for always being there, the DTF table, even during the loneliest times ( as lonely as a man with love.)

Before I believed that eating out at restaurant was just a way to quell a growling stomach or a luxury for those with deep pockets or celebrating a special occasion. But today, dining at Din Tai Fung Al Ghurair City Center branch is more than just filling my stomach. It's an opportunity to rejuvenate and recharge after a long week as a massage therapist.

Dining alone allows me to nourish my soul and give myself some much-needed personal space.

### *Lesson 15*

## **Accommodation 10 Commandments Plus One**

*Let's foster a harmonious living space with these accommodations ten commandments:*

- 1) Encourage roommates to keep the room clean by demonstrating your own cleaning habits or creating a schedule together.
- 2) Respect your roommates' sleep by minimizing noise in the morning and being mindful of your voice during phone calls or video chats.
- 3) Remember to share the conversation. Listen to your roommates' stories. They have also beautiful stories.
- 4) If a misunderstanding arises, kindly address the issue with open communication. Rebuild trust and verify it.
- 5) Cooking and sharing food with your roommates can be a great bonding experience. Always ask before eating someone else's food and keep your own food stored properly, not inside the cupboard (if having trust issue putting inside the ref), to avoid any unpleasant odors.
- 6) Be mindful of your roommates' space and privacy. Always ask before entering their room or adjacent bed and respect their boundaries. Ask permission to borrow some stuffs, especially money. Give it back during salary, so you can borrow again if emergency. If possible cut this old habit. Unhealthy.



7) Avoid from spreading rumors or engaging in gossip which causes friction. Remember that your words can impact how others perceive you.

8) Help maintain a clean and hygienic space by tidying up after yourself. Apply deodorant even just at home. Apply deodorant of course after shower. Ask the Kabayan what this means.

9) Remember to be considerate of others' needs by minding your schedule for things like using gas stove and *laundrying*. Try not to use the washing machine every day so others have a chance to use it too.

10) Additionally, please make sure to follow the company's accommodation rules such as no alcohol, no visitors, no vandalism, no destruction, no cigarettes and the curfew. Treat your accommodation with respect and care, as if it were your home away from home.

*Here's the plus one. If your roommate's snore is bugging you, sleep first and give a vibrating snore too. Loud and clear now my dear roomies.....*

## *Lesson 16*

### **Mascot Bao Bao**



Have you had the pleasure of meeting our beloved Bao Bao mascot? You can find him at every Din Tai Fung location worldwide. Bao Bao is an iconic symbol of DTF's signature item.

Allow me to share my first encounter with Bao Bao. During a visit to DTF-Mall of the Emirates, I found myself fifth in line, patiently waiting my turn.

Suddenly, I heard a cheerful, chiming voice say, 'Hello, welcome, ni hao!' and was greeted by a hostess with a friendly and welcoming smile, which left a lasting impression on me. Though I was in no rush to be seated, I was captivated by the familiar-looking mascot.

Before learning his name, I referred to him as a 'giant siopao', reminiscent of the famous meat bun siopao in the Philippines. If you ask any of my Kabayan, they'll confirm this comparison!

Suddenly, I was greeted once again by the joyful, 'Hello, welcome, ni hao!' and I responded with 'ni hao too.' The hostess then inquired, 'Table for how many, sir?'

"Sure, just one please!" I replied with a friendly smile as I became curious to try Bao Bao's signature item.

The server promptly led me to a nearby square table. "Thanks," I said as I settled in near the kitchen door and received the menu and order sheet. "You're welcome, sir," the friendly waitress responded courteously.

As I opened the menu, I realized there was a wide selection of enticing Taiwanese dishes, although not all were familiar to me.

"What do you want to order, sir?" the waitress asked kindly.

"Ah.....Xiao Long Bao," I replied. I think I pronounced it "*sha-lowng-bow*" in my twang.

*\*Xiaolongbao refers to a type of small Chinese steamed bun (baozi) traditionally prepared in a xiaolong, a small bamboo steaming basket,*

*hence the name. Xiaolongbao are often referred to as a kind of "dim sum".*

*\*Mascot is a character that represents the symbolic values of a brand.*

*\*XLB – Bao Bao's signature item.*

## *Lesson 17*

### **When Mr. Lay Tapping My Shoulder**

When Mr. Lay tapped my shoulder one day, he graciously imparted his encouragement to me by saying, 'Rommel, please continue writing.'

It was a humbling and highly honored moment as I received such compliments from our esteemed COO. This tapping became a catalyst for me to further pursue my passion for book writing. While my genre may not be as conventional as newsletter write-ups like of CPRG Connect, I still find joy in what I am doing and am committed to it.

Through this experience, I have learned that even the simplest gesture of encouragement can make a profound impact on our lives in aiding the achievement of our dreams.

Did you know that you can accomplish amazing things simply by doing what you love, without necessarily seeking recognition? The legacy you leave on your readers is far more important than any recognition you might receive. I'm grateful for Mr Lay simple tapping of my shoulder as an encouragement to help me keep going.

As I continue on my journey to Dubai for my books, I stay focused on my passion for appreciating artwork and artists. **And remember, as you work towards greatness, don't give up** - keep

chipping away at your goals. Let your unique perspective shine through in your work, and know that your message has the power to touch others wherever it is shared.

### *Lesson 18*

## **Pondering Moment At The Staff Dining Area**

As the old saying goes, 'To roam around patiently at a busy barber shop, you still end up with a new haircut.'

Similar to avoiding playing near a flaming fire, there's a chance of getting burnt sooner.

Whenever I'm in the staff dining area with random DTF kitchen crews, food handlers, chefs, front of the house servers, restaurant managers, and others, who are on break for our free meals, I can't help but reflect on those quotes.

Although I am surrounded with them for many years, still I've never become a bonafide kitchen crew member or a restaurant server or a chef. But at least I have great chance to care about their well-being.

I am always mindful of them and offer them a massage whenever they have schedule.

*Please note:* Exercise caution when confronted with negative people or environment, as it can have a detrimental impact.

It is also imperative to be mindful of the words that escape our lips, as they serve as a reflection of our inner self.

### *Lesson 19*

## **Server Jam, the Rescue 911**

My throbbing heart is in my throat – lub..dub...lub..dub...lub.....– making it impossible for me to speak, so I simply wink my eye in front of a dining mirror above the faucet. I feel as though the air has been locked out of my twin lungs.

When I am finally able to nod my head to someone reflecting on the mirror, my sight grows out so high watching him like a ghost appearing at my back. I have seen my left shoulder covering on his body. I have seen his face on the mirror so curious as mine. So I turn my face to server Jam.

I begin to listen of what he is speaking. "What happen?" He keeps talking asking my bad situation. "What's wrong bro?" I couldn't reply. I still catching my breath. Sweating.

Jam, to the rescue 911, gives me a glass of water to clear my throat obstructed by a large milk fish bone or *bangus*.

*We appreciate and never forget those helping hands,  
especially extended during unexpected moments.*

*Lesson 20*

**The Walking Xiao Long Bao**



As I walked into the restaurant heading towards a vacant table, I was met with a delightful sight. A cheerful chef dressed in a white double-breasted jacket, black pants, a white apron, and a DTF white cap, approached me carrying a five-layer bamboo steaming basket. I couldn't help but feel cheerful as I saw him still smiling underneath his facemask. I knew he was smiling at me beneath his mask, because I saw his eyes were crinkling at the outer sides, adding to the joyous atmosphere.

Then the chef opened the basket and the rich aroma of steaming chicken soup filled the air. I couldn't wait to try the DTF signature dish



known as XIAO LONG BAO, while accommodating to my assigned dining table.

XLB is sealed with a slippery white flour wrapper and served with a flavorful broth and filling. I learned from a quick search on Uncle Google that the XLB has roots dating back to Taiwan forty years ago.

I couldn't wait to try the XLB dipped in black vinegar spiced with sliced ginger and chili. With each bite comes a burst of decadent flavor that's both spicy and yummy. I was completely satisfied after the last bite and used a triangular paper napkin to wipe off the amazing sauce from my fingers.

As I stood to leave the table, I bid farewell to the walking Xiao Long Bao chef and looked forward to his another dining table delivery. Then, I even thought about writing a book about DTF journey of mine, because like the walking XLB, sharing smile and delivering love for good food is the next best thing to eating it.

## *Lesson 21*

### **Gazing At The Burj Khalifa**

*Happy breaktime! Standing in front of the Din Tai Fung Dubai Mall restaurant and gazing at the majestic Burj Khalifa tower, I couldn't resist the urge to write down my thoughts. And it started.*

It's been an incredible journey with you, Burj Khalifa, the tallest tower on earth.

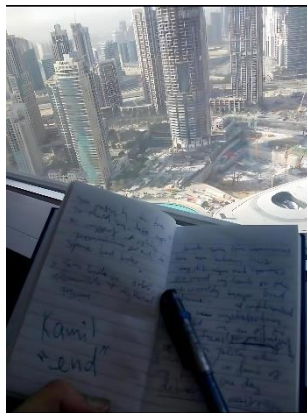
A decade ago, you graced my Facebook profile picture and were a symbol of how much I had accomplished and how far I had been. You were the most awe-inspiring human-made creation I'd seen until then.

Now, I have been working at DTF restaurant just a stone's throw away from your glass-walled feet. Our overwhelming countenance eventually fading.....

*Back to reality.*

Done breaktime. Back to work. While waiting to the next staff, I write:

Time has come too fast when you work in hectic scheduled job. Time flies unnoticed unlike in non busy days. Like doing my massage work, never I notice how quick each allotted session. You know why? It is all because my eyes not glued on the clock. In short I avoid

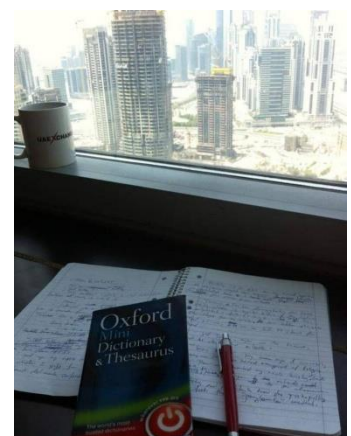


watching the watch while doing passionately the whole routine, the back massage job. A compliment to all hardworking DTF staffs.

Trivia:



*Did you know that my first three books were actually written at the world-renowned Burj Khalifa residence? The experience was truly inspiring and I credit the opportunity to access the B.K. library on the 123rd floor, complete with unlimited coffee, fresh fruit juices, hi-speed WiFi and delicious Pachi chocolate, as a big part of that. And let's not forget the breathtaking panoramic view of Dubai from atop the building - it honestly expanded my imagination and enriched my creative vision. It's all thanks to my generous friend, Mr. Karan Soni, an American citizen, who graciously offered me a free three-year (2017-2020) stay at the tallest building in the world.*



## ***Mise-en-place* At DTF Nakheel Mall**

After enjoying my lunch in the staff dining area at DTF-Nakheel Mall branch, I proceeded to the kitchen lobby where I requested a clove of garlic. On a daily basis, I consume raw garlic to improve my blood pressure and cholesterol levels, and have found this method to be effective.

As I chewed the garlic in front of the chefs and their kitchen assistants, I noticed some of them appeared curious as to the health benefits of consuming raw garlic when it is swallowed whole. I took the opportunity to explain my reasoning.

Moreover, I am fascinated by the kitchen staff's work. Although I am not inherently passionate about food, I have always been intrigued by the processes and preparations involved in cooking, especially during peak hours.

According to Chef Raju, the key is proper preparation and organization. This includes washing vegetables, including my medicinal garlic, and arranging ingredients in a specific manner, as well as having pre-made sauces and sliced meats at the ready in their proper measurements.

In accordance with the concept of muscle memory and efficiency, professional chefs only take what they require while cooking. This approach enables them to prepare large numbers of perfectly timed menus both individually or within a team setting. Additionally, chefs are

advised to know when to move at a slower pace in order to move quickly, especially during rush periods.

This approach minimizes errors and saves time. It is crucial to remain engaged in the kitchen's activities. This approach is dubbed "mise-en-place" by Google, which is a French term that implies putting everything in order. This refers to having all the necessary ingredients, tools, and equipment ready before embarking on meal preparation. In essence, execution cannot commence until all the elements have been adequately planned and organized.

Individuals who achieve great success in their lives, such as a chef, demonstrate a profound ability to organize and plan meticulously. These accomplished individuals determine beforehand the crucial aspects to prioritize and the ones to avoid. They are adept at gauging the optimal amount of pleasurable experiences required, avoiding any excesses.



## **Personal Encounter with DTF Store Managers**

I gained valuable insights into how effective team leaders, section supervisors, and DTF branch managers deliver messages to their teams. I was impressed by so many things!

They were so articulate and to the point (like manager Leslie). There was no ambiguity in their messages, which I really appreciated.

They made sure to maintain transparent eye contact with all listeners, which created an even deeper connection.

They were so open to suggestions (like manager Monaliza) , which made the staff feel truly valued and part of the messaging process. Creating an environment where staff can interact openly helped to eradicate shyness and awkward moments. These leaders are truly amazing!

Leaders have a knack for lightening the mood and making us laugh (like manager Nikko). When things start to feel dull, they inject some humor to recharge our energy levels. And then it's back to business as usual.

I've noticed that sometimes our operation manager likes to get up and participate in our brief meetings (like sir Eslam). This body language sends a message that they're part of the team, and they even ask a few questions to keep everyone engaged. By doing so, they ensure that everyone pays attention and stays on their toes.

Leaders have the power to spread positivity with a simple smile (like sweet smile of manager Nina). It may seem like a small gesture,

but it can have a huge impact on those around them. When you give out positivity, it naturally comes back to you.

Lastly, please take time to attend to our daily briefing in any DTF branch. Observed them. What you see, what you get, as I don't have anything further to add.

*I've noticed that good followers are usually responsible and willing to take action. At the same time, leaders tend to be effective when they actually listen to their team and take into account what the majority needs.*

## **Walkie-talkies Are Not For Trash Talkers**

Have you ever thought about how important walkie-talkies can be in a restaurant like DTF? Instead of relying on whispers or wired earbuds, staff members can discreetly communicate with each other using tiny microphones clipped to their collars or handheld devices with blinking lights. Not only does this improve work efficiency, but it also creates a less stressful work environment. Without walkie-talkies, the restaurant would struggle to provide the level of service and efficiency it's known for. Let's appreciate the value of this simple yet effective communication tool in our workplace.

I can't help but think about the moment when my walkie-talkie's battery died, cutting off my inner communication line. It's not easy to work without it, but thankfully walkie talkies are a great tool to help managers, section leaders, chefs, and in-house staff communicate with each other efficiently.

With walkie talkies, we can let each other know which tables are ready to use, when we need to pre-bus, when immediate transfers are needed to share guests, and even follow-up on menu items without unnecessary shouting or arguing.

Additionally, two-way radios are helpful in resolving customer complaints quickly and keeping things running smoothly.

While using this portable technology, I've learned the importance of showing courtesy (not throwing trash-talks or rubbish thoughts to bully a colleague), rather as as TRUSTtalker, respect towards others by actively listening one another. It's no secret that work-related stress is inevitable, but with the help of walkie talkies, we can at least make communication stress-free.



## **DTF Dubai Mall Opening Day**

For me, the joy of discovering and expanding the experience with new DTF branch, might just be my great motivator to pursue more on writing a book about Din Tai Fung restaurant.

It brings such immense happiness to me, to delve into the enticing world of Taiwanese foods, like painting a vivid picture of enticing dish into words.

It's a delightful blend of passion (my book writing) and pleasure (eating DTF signature dish) while capturing the essence of memorable dining moments.

Writing about foods experience and my DTF journey is truly a cheerful endeavor that fills my heart with excitement and leaves the taste buds and my heart to longing for more.....

*(I wrote this on my old tablet after enjoying a complimentary meal during the opening day of DTF Dubai mall branch circa 2019)*

Guess what? Downtown Dubai just got lucky with this new DTF Dubai Mall outlet. Folks in this area don't need to go to DTF Mall of Emirates where the waiting time there is almost an hour and not just minutes, only to satisfy their Xiao Long Bao cravings.

## Lesson 26

### Red Bean Buns

Imagine sinking your teeth into a pillowy bun stuffed with silky, delicious red bean paste—it's like heaven in your mouth! No wonder the red beans bun is the DTF diners' favorite (also a fave to closing staffs hehehe, relate?) as the ultimate way to end a totally awesome meal at DTF. You will probably agree with me too.



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*Is red bean bun a treat or tricks? Kindly read:*

In the workplace, it's common to encounter a variety of people with different attitudes especially at Din Tai Fung with hundreds of staff from different nationalities.

While sharing thoughts and ideas can help build relationships, it's sometimes necessary to provide critical feedback to colleagues. Often, we're hesitant to do criticism, unless it's someone we're close to.

In casual colleague relationships, we tend to TREAT to positive feedback and avoid negative criticism. This is known as the red bean bun approach - giving positive feedback (as the top cover of the bun), then negative feedback (as the red bean paste, the middle part covered by top bun), and ended with positive feedback to our colleagues (as the white bun, the bottom cover). In other words, the red bean paste, the flaws and imperfections, are hidden and wrap up by two white bun. What does this TRICKS mean?

Instead of reprimanding our colleague because of their slightly off behavior, we oftentimes praise positively, unrevealing the sad truth (like covering up the red bean paste with sweet white bun of lies), because we don't want to offend other feelings by evading the issue. And as much as we're afraid to be offended as the same.

As I have observed, this approach is a playing safe, either treat or tricks. We want only the sweet food melting inside our palate, (like tasting a fluffy soft bun filled with smooth red bean paste a perfect to end a meal). We don't want to spill the beans, that could hurt somebody.

Though telling only affirmative things help maintain a positive relationship, still it is not addressing directly to the issue which we are hesitant to criticize. It is about exposing secretly the negative side of our colleague of which if being corrected, like our own mistakes, that is all for our character growth and development.

*Please note: One needs to have a genuine HEART to point out defects to others.*

## Lesson 27

# Gym Of Discipline

*(inspired by Sir Jhaq Cabansag and Paulo Narvaez)*

Let me tell you about the key to success that my DTF colleagues have shared with me. It is all about Discipline (like in gym workout).

According to them, acquiring discipline is not an overnight success. It is like going to gym to gain abs muscle. You've got to work at it every day, following a proper program and a proper diet. Without this formula, you can't achieve anything like aiming your goal, even how intelligent and talented you are. But with discipline, you can be a champion of your endeavor.

Discipline hold you to be focused on your purpose and priorities, even when things get not favorable to you. My colleagues said that having good discipline is not easy. You must have to exert effort, hard work and determination. Having that, it's not impossible to obtain.

And the best part, if you are used to this skill, the discipline, you'll be in control of your direction. You will be unstoppable. So let's get into the world of fitness and start flexing our muscle of discipline starting today, at the gym of this so-called life!



Are you stressed? Why not try engaging in enjoyable exercise like Zumba, yoga, going for a walk at Union Park my favorite hiking spot, playing sports, and spending time with friends (no alcohol session, just take care of your Blood Pressure loop and bad cholesterol) to relax and unwind after work? It's important to find ways to entertain yourself and take care of your mental and physical health, because they play a crucial role in shaping the future of your career.

Therefore, make destressing activities a part of your everyday life.

Keep trying it. If ever you try then you fail, cheers and congratulations! Because many people are afraid to try or lazy of trying.

## Wealth Is Health

I used to think that rich people spend their money on whatever they want, like ordering food. At DTF, even though I was not the server who directly offers a menu to the guests and explains its corresponding prices, my second-hand observation supports my claim that wealthy customers are mostly wise spenders. I guess they spend their money well. That's why they are rich or becoming 'more' richer.

Their wealth is their time, meaning they acquire it by spending much time and effort. Their money has worth. Even though they have everything at their disposal, they still look for quality, a restaurant that provides value for their money. That's a healthy mentality.

### *Importance Of Wealth In Maintaining Good Health*

Financially successful individuals tend to be wise spenders. It is likely that their financial success is achieved through diligent time and effort. These individuals prioritize quality and seek out establishments (like good restaurant) that provide value for their money. Such a mentality can be viewed as essential for maintaining good health.

## Learning to Learn

It's understandable that one of our newly hired staff is feeling a bit reluctant about the rigorous DTF trainings and exams. However, it's important to remember that learning is a key part of life. It helps us grow and develop our skills, and training and exams are intentional steps towards achieving that growth.

Though it may be challenging, it's important to put pressure on yourself to succeed. Remember, success isn't always comfortable, but it's a necessary part of the learning process. Let's all work together to achieve success and learn how to learn.

I just wanted to share that the DTF exam is a helpful tool in determining an employee's competence and efficiency. Of course, we wouldn't ask them to do anything beyond their job description. It's interesting though, we had one staff member who refused to take the exam because it wasn't in their contract.

They were very certain about it, *ha-ha*. I jokingly asked if they signed a contract for massages too, but before I could even finish my sentence, they left without a word. Oh well, that staff member is off to new adventures.

## **Trolley Of Fortune**

As I push my trolley wheels here at Dubai Mall DTF, I'm reminded that life, like wheels, has its ups and downs. But I choose to see the flat wheels or spare tires, these are moments of opportunities to rest and regain my strength, then keep moving forward.



No matter where my wheels of fortune take me, I'll keep a positive attitude and stay determined to reach my destination. Even in a pandemic when car wheels shift speed, I won't give up. As Sir Charles Darwin in his *Survival of the Fittest* book, he once said,

'It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent. It is the one most ADAPTABLE to change.'

So, choose to be adaptable and have faith in ones ability to overcome any obstacle.



## Chopsticks Anxiety

Do you know that some people may feel a bit anxious when eating at a Chinese restaurant if they're not used to using chopsticks? As someone who grew up using a fork and spoon, I can relate to feeling a bit nervous about it. I tried to learn how to use chopsticks out of curiosity, but I'm still not very good at it and I never learned the proper technique.

It's ironic that I worked at Din Tai Fung for years, wiping down hundreds of chopsticks every day, but I never fully learned how to use them myself. But no need to worry - if you ever serve me slippery crab dumplings, I'll just use my clean fingers! Overall, I've learned that it's okay to stick with the utensils you're comfortable with.

Great, you've had a valuable experience! It's important to remember that sometimes we don't achieve the outcome we desire when we haven't put in enough effort. When we don't feel passionate about learning a new skill, it can be harder to succeed. It's okay to struggle, like when you were learning to use chopsticks and didn't want to look silly. Keep pushing forward and trying your best, and you'll make progress!

*Chopsticks, oh how they stir up my curiosity! Not in the way of child playfulness when rubbed together to eliminate splinters (like bamboo sticks). No, my curiosity is based by the act of rubbing hundreds of chopsticks each day. I diligently rub the wet bundled chopsticks with a clean sheet mop until they are dry, sorted, and ready for quick restocking to DTF Dubai Mall restaurant station A to F. There are no splinters, no rush of friction on these Chinese utensils. So, naturally, I wonder why we use chopsticks that are half-wooden and half-metallic, with a round shape at the eating end and a square shape for the handle. Perhaps it's a perfect balance between heaven and earth. I must investigate further. I rub it first.*

## **“My Friend” or Pa-re! A Form Of Casual Greetings**

It's such a delightful sound to my ears when my foreign DTF coworkers greet me with 'My friend' every time we meet. Although we're not particularly close or know each other on a personal level, we share a friendly bond as colleagues. During break-time or after our duty schedule, we often share smiles and laughter, which I cherish.

I'm very grateful for these casual friends, now mostly kabayan or countrymen, who I see from time-to-time but still trust and enjoy spending time with. Whether it's having a drink, singing our hearts out during videoke, or playing a game of billiards (now with Indonesian guy), we still make wonderful memories together. These are the kinds of friends who may not be available to watch Netflix with on a Saturday night or plan future vacations with, but I'm so grateful for their company.

We often use the word 'friend' rather lightly, but a true friend is someone who values you for who you are, listens to you, and supports you through both good and bad times.

Sadly, busy schedules can sometimes cause friendships to fade, even for an eccentric person like me who's always busy studying online and writing books after work.

While I may not have as much time for full-time bonding, I still cherish casual and genuine friendships, like singing Scorpion and Bon Jovi at karaoke ( with DTF Jofel from Iligan city) and some buddies for a week.

That's all “my friend”. I need to prep an oatmeal for my diet. Oooppsss! How about the “Pa-re”?

I remember my Sri Lankan colleague Chinthaka Deepal asked me, why we refer to the Kabayan (Filipino countrymen) guy as Pa-re?

Well, utilizing the term 'Pa-re!' to address all male Kabayan or Filipinos serves as an expression of affection among in a Filipino community, derived from the shortened version of '*kompare*' or '*kompadre*," which pertains to the concepts of brotherhood or solidarity commonly observed during wedding ceremonies as co-sponsors or godparents (*ninong*, *ninang*) in Catholic baptisms. Thus, by understanding this cultural context, you can comprehend why you may refer to a Kabayan as 'pare' even if you are not personally acquainted. (Like thank you, BHAI!; Bhai, which I believe means 'brother' in Hindi, correct? Or I stand corrected. If Bhai is like Hindi for a buddy, you know? I think that's where Bisaya got the term "Bai" to call their Bisaya friends).

Please take note that the address 'Pare' is suitable for men, while 'Ma-re' is appropriate for Kabayan women, correct? However, it is recommended that we refrain from using the term 'Ma-re,' as it can lead to some discomfort when addressing Filipina women. This might seem amusing, but it is primarily due to our lack of familiarity with the usage.

You may also use the word Pardz as a compacted form of Pa-re. But excluding Part, Partz, and Pa-part, these abbreviations are used to call a partner.

## **While Crossing The Zebra Lane, Off To Work**

Dubai's winter is over and it is hot now! I was crossing the Union Rigga pedestrian lane and felt like I was ready to sweat buckets.

Bring on the scorching sun, I'm ready to take on the heat. I'm feeling like a goat kid being teased right now. But I'm my own hype man, so I've got enough self-affirmation.

However, it would be nice to have a friend to push me forward and keep me moving like the warm embrace of the sun's rays. Unfortunately, my friend from CPRG is living miles away now and as I looked at our photo in my phone while waiting for green light, I couldn't help feeling lonely.

It's always tough when my Dubai friends start heading back to their countries, whether it's for good or just a vacation. I guess it's making me feel like I'm 'Leaving On A Jet Plane' too.

I no longer enjoy writing in a prose style like I used to, especially when accompanied by the song 'Leaving On A Jet Plane'. Journaling and revisiting memories has become draining for me, so I try not to dwell on the past.

As I crossed the Union Rigga pedestrian, where jaywalking can result in penalties, I thought about my friend who once to cross with me on the way to work at the Chinese Palace Restaurant in Al Ghurair Center mall, now heading home for good.

*Quotes I have made after crossing pedestrian lane:*

"As I have observed in zebra lane, different nationalities portraying faces in different lights. They reflect pictures of what's their culture. Let's take

inspiration from them. That everyone is unique. Everyone has different faces to face challenges."

"I've seen some people wearing casual clothing like jeans, such as ripped LEVI'S denims. That can make a strong statement about durability of character. Let's embrace what makes us unique and showcase it with pride."

"Sometimes, taking a full stop can lead us forward. Let's step off ZEBRA LANE when lights green, that means wait until we are capable enough to explore new possibilities."

"The knowledge we gain is not limited to books and Wikipedia. We can find wisdom in every aspect of people as they have passed by, through their body languages and facial gesture. Let's always strive to learn, grow, and expand our horizons even in most awkward situation."

"In nostalgic times, we often create something beautiful. A time that we best express ourselves, like this moment of homesickness to a friend; the 41st lesson I had written."

**Teamwork is the key that unlocks the door to success, as it divides the task, leading to unified achievements.**



### *Lesson 34*

## **Dumpling Viewing**

Mall goers and DTF customers can freely observe dumpling makers who display, at front kitchen, their passion and skill through meticulously crafting each pleat of every dumpling. With graceful movements, they knead a mixture of secret ingredients, adding precise pinches of white flour and expertly constructing each dumpling with a consistent number of folds.

The resulting tiny waves form a tail which is glued together at the peak of the dumpling. Additionally, I noted the dumpling makers use a weighing scale to ensure uniformity and precision in the portions they create. Any mistake, no matter how small, renders the dumpling substandard and therefore, unfit for sale.



I was particularly drawn to the rolled dumplings which were made entirely from scratch and crafted to exact replicas of the first batch. Each dumpling was unique, yet appeared identical to the rest.

The craft of making dumplings demands a significant amount of patience, which serves as a reminder that success often requires prolonged effort. With focus being crucial, this practice has taught me the importance of carefully attending to every detail in order to achieve an optimal outcome.

## Pantry Section

In the DTF pantry section, I observed the "juice makers" concocting beverages such as milk tea and fruit juices with delicate precision that captured attention. Despite the lack of an audience, being in the pantry felt like performing on a stage. The smashing of mixed drinks and ice crashes implied the presence of an eager crowd. I opted for a milk tea with premium grade "sago", made from chewy round balls of palm tree extract.

Once my order was ready, I thanked *Sonu Bhai* (brother) before taking a sip. As I tasted the drink, a sense of tranquility overcame me, reminding me that a good beverage can refresh and bring calm regardless of surrounding chaos or storms within the soul.

Another sip, this time with black pearls of sago, reminded me to consistently express gratitude for even the smallest things in life. Appreciation unveils the treasures of life that may be hidden beneath its surface, and teaches us to never take anything for granted, especially **time**.

I've always heard that the most valuable thing in life isn't money, but time. Once it's gone, it's gone forever. Money can be lost, but you can always earn it again. The truth is, time is incredibly precious. If I had a time machine, I would definitely use it to make the most of my idle moments by studying and learning practically. It's great to know that I can share my failures and lessons with the next generation to help them understand the importance. **Don't waste time**, because it flies by without you even realizing it. Once it's gone, you can never get it back.



### *Lesson 36*

## **The V.I.P. Room**

In the VIP (I wish I could redefine that to Valuable Interesting Person, lol!) room at DTF-Al Ghurair Center (AGC) branch, there were two large round tables paired with chairs adorned with dragon engravings. The atmosphere was palpable, surrounded by paintings of koi fish, lush flora, and of ostriches in the great outdoors. It was a harmonious, ecologically-friendly concept.

The music played was that of Chinese spa serenade, adding elegance and finesse to the ambiance. One could sense vitality and liveliness exuding from the surroundings.

I took a seat and savored the freshly delivered milk-tea. While waiting for an array of sumptuous dishes, another set of instrumental songs graced my ears. It seemed that the music was about hope, which reminded me that better times were ahead.

Like beautiful music, hope would always be there to guide and uplift my inner feelings. For a musician, this serenade was an inspiration, as the smell of cooking food was to a chef. The aroma of the ordered menu signaled the imminent arrival of the sumptuous dishes.

I was delighted by the arrival of the highly acclaimed egg fillet of beef dish, which was truly irresistible. The subsequent presentation of the rice cake was equally impressive, featuring a soft, spongy texture that offered a pleasant glutinous consistency. Despite my initial hesitation, I found the red bean bun's sweetness and stickiness to be quite enjoyable. 'One more please?' I inquired.

Upon receiving the bill, I realized that dining on Taiwanese food from DTF had been an exhilarating and unforgettable experience.

## **UAE Flag Day**

On the occasion of United Arab Emirates National Day, some of Dubai Mall visitors were treated to a mesmerizing view of Asian chefs deftly preparing dumplings at DTF open kitchen.

Among the dishes being prepared were shrimps and chickens pot stickers, presented in a pan-fried dumpling format and delivered to diners' tables by the food handler. Additionally, the skilled chefs crafted the mutton dumplings and red bean buns, artfully adorned with green (spinach), white (normal flour), red (beetroot) and black (edible charcoal) UAE flaglets in tribute to the event.

It is worth noting that the National Day is a momentous occasion for reflection on a UAE nation's history and a valuable opportunity to pass on its rich heritage to coming generations.



## **Dancing Fountain View**

As I parked my trolley at section F, a lovely open dining area, I couldn't help but notice some of our smoking customers delighting in the stunning views of the water. The fountain's graceful movements in response to classic Arabian music truly amazed them, especially as they savored our famous soup dumplings.

Our DTF Dubai Mall branch on the lower ground floor truly has a wow-worthy location that makes for a fantastic food tripping experience with spectacular views. Once the music faded away and the dancing waters stopped, our customers were quick to flip back the menu book and order some delicious dishes.

Some craved for Szechuan chicken wonton, others for chicken chow mein, beef fillet, and fried rice with eggs. Others went for steamed chicken and vegetable dumplings, steamed mushroom, scallops seafood xiaolongbao. And some customers still enjoyed puffing their cigarettes as they waited for their meals.

And for those seeking a healthier beverage option, our waiter is happy to provide a refreshing bottle of Perrier water. Plus, for our non-smoking patrons, we have plenty of dining tables available both in our stylish Oriental-themed area and contemporary section. Take time to breathe and be present while savoring our delicious Taiwanese cuisine.

## **DTF Shop Daily Bread**

At DTF, we have a daily team briefing that is really valuable for everyone involved. This is an opportunity for the staff to connect with each other and ensure that everyone is on the same page, from shop leaders to chefs.

We usually do this before starting our tasks and it only lasts around ten to fifteen minutes. I feel so fortunate to be a part of this team and have the chance to learn from the exchange of information during these briefings, which I consider our 'daily bread' for team building.

Through these meetings, I've learned the importance of recognizing past mistakes and finding ways to improve going forward. We also make sure that everyone's suggestions, questions, and reactions are addressed within the group, creating a comfortable environment where everyone can be heard.

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### *A "Bread" Time Love Story For Fast Asleep*

Having trouble sleeping after a long day work at DTF restaurants? I have tips for you on how to fall asleep like a pro:

As you close your eyes, try avoiding things like overthinking, dwelling on past regrets, too much stressing about the future. Just ignore unpleasant, annoying murmuring heart beat. Heart burn will eventually stop, if you take it for granted.

As you hug your hotdog pillow, put away your mobile phone, iPad, tablet. Turn off the light.

As you lay down, try to clear your mind of unwanted thoughts, even to catch a wink of tempting guests like opening again your tablet for news update or checking for the last time your vibrating FB messenger.

And just let yourself relax. It's okay to have some moments of nothingness where you feel totally carefree. When you start yawning and feel drowsy, it's time to hit the hay. Goodnight!

Oops!

Again, once you start yawning and feeling sleepy, make sure you don't forget to set your alarm for tomorrow morning's shift or you might wake up in a panic.

And the bed time Love Story has begun:

*My dear, as I laid down, I can't help but be curious about the way you become silent in the middle of the night, right before my tightly closed eyes.*

*It's as if the world around us fades, and I can hear nothing but the steady beat of your heart.*

*Despite my limitations to move, as I lay down in bed, I feel privileged to know you beyond your beauty.*

*Your inner angels speak a language I can't comprehend and your serenading voice snoring with me through your uninhibited soul, leaving me in a melancholic state in my solitary overseas DTF bachelor flat.*

*And in your silence, I find myself drawn to you the most.*

*It's only at night that I can hear the symphony of your LDR heartbeat and my thoughts become a jumbled mess, vibrating with my own trembling snore!*

*Your looks are stunning and I can't deny they caught my sleepy eyes tonight.*

*But what truly captivates me is your warmth and soulfulness.*

*It shines brighter than a thousand stars, blinking in the dark skin of the universe!*

*Wish to be with you dear, whoever you are,  
even in my dreams!*

*Longing to court you forever,*

*GOOD FRIEND the dreamer*

Please note: Avoid eating too much food at night, such as *rice and bread* that is white floured, or being overly full when going to sleep. It can cause bloating in your stomach and prevent you from having a restful sleep. See you tomorrow at DTF!

## **Waiting In Line At DTF Mall of the Emirates**

On the occasion that I had not yet established a connection with Din Tai Fung restaurant, I had an impressive experience at the Mall of Emirates branch. As an individual who bears admiration for Superman, I concur with his statement that I would rather fall victim to a Kryptonite bullet than exhibit culinary skills in the kitchen. As a result, I decided to seek a dining establishment.

During my visit to the Mall of the Emirates, I witnessed massive red Chinese characters with bold English translations in neon lights that read: DIN TAI FUNG. I arrived promptly and joined a diverse crowd of customers, waiting in line.

. Although it seemed like we were gathered for a year-end feast, in reality, this was an everyday occurrence. Waiting for an hour to be seated was overwhelming, particularly for an inexperienced food enthusiast like myself. This was not due to any inefficiencies in customer service but rather due to the limited seating capacity that the restaurant can accommodate.

For novice food enthusiasts such as myself, the hour-long wait for a table at DTF was quite surprising. This wait time was not attributed to any shortcomings in customer service but rather due to limited seating capacity that struggles to accommodate the high volume of walk-in guests and loyal patrons vying for the exceptional DTF cuisine and amenities.

During my time in line, I came to realize that the act of waiting for a table heightened the anticipation and made the eventual dining experience all the more satisfying.

The wait time afforded me the opportunity to carefully survey my surroundings and appreciate things that I had previously taken for granted; including the chance encounter with an old friend who happened to be on their way to the VOX cinema. After being reacquainted and notified, we were able to catch up over a meal at DTF.

As such, my time spent waiting for a table at DTF allowed me to recognize all that I had to be thankful for, even in the waiting.





## *Lesson 41*

# **An Epistle of Encouragement**

*(written at Dubai Mall stock room)*

To stay motivated, it's important to focus on the reasons why you chose to come to Dubai. Embrace the experience of living in this diverse and vibrant city, and strive to maintain a positive outlook even when working far from home.

Remember, it's important to set attainable goals and appreciate what you have, rather than constantly striving for more. While it's natural to think about the future, try not to let it consume you. Take a step back if needed and relax before moving forward. Ultimately, enjoy the journey and embrace each moment as it comes. Let's do this!

Keep going, even if today is a struggle. Your hardships are actually helping you become stronger, wiser, and more humble. Don't let them break you - let them make you.

I understand that my words may not be immediately accepted or appreciated by everyone, but I hope that when you need a little extra motivation, you'll remember what I've shared with you.

I speak from personal experience and understand what it's like to be where you are. I too, started writing self-help thoughts while working overseas and struggled to motivate myself. But now I'm here, encouraging you and myself as well, to never give up on no matter what!

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## *Terrible Headache*

I have learned how to approach our group chat with a positive attitude whenever I request to leave from duty, by using simple and clear language.

It is important to avoid misunderstandings when we request time off or any other topic. We should steer clear of jargon and slang in formal communication. Let's keep our messages straightforward, so we can all communicate effectively in our GC.

I'll admit that I used to try to impress others with "fancier" language, but I've since realized that it's much easier to understand and be understood when we use plain language.

For example, instead of saying, "I'm experiencing a severe cephalalgia," we can simply say "I have a terrible headache."

*Dear Manager Richard,*

I am writing to respectfully request permission to be absent for today. I have a terrible headache. I apologize for any inconvenience.

Sincerely,

*DTF Good Friend*

## *Lesson 42*

### **Angry Bird**

When a customer turns into an angry bird? Well, when they start to feel cranky, rude, loud and demand their so-called 'rights' as a customer, even if it's ridiculous. Sometimes they just want to be angry for no reason at all. But fortunately, my DTF manager knows how to handle professionally these types of people. She taught me how to deal with these inevitable situations in the restaurant business.

I asked her, "Who's an angry bird customer and do we have them?" She said, 'Those people who show up at the front desk with a bad attitude and yes, we have them.'

So, I asked her, "Why are they so angry? Is it the bad food or terrible service?"

"It's not that his unhappy about the DTF services. As a matter of fact, he hasn't even ordered yet. He just arrives and still about to ask about the food. But he's clearly uncomfortable already."

"How you deal with angry bird?"

"Just smile and greet him warmly. Don't take it personally if he seems upset. Speak positively and ask if he needs any help. Let's show him that we're here to make everything better."

"Do you think people get angry because they're emotional, stressed out, going through a tough time or just super hungry from shopping all day?"

"Yeah, it could be any number of things. It's usually not about us, though."

"So, better give him the menu and get him some food. After all he'll be happier after he eats, is it a right thing to do?"

"Exactly! Once he's all fed and happy, he'll leave DTF dining table with a smile."

"Awesome!"

*I learned something important from that chat - if you want to take care of upset customers, even those who haven't started eating yet, you got to show some empathy. That means getting where they're coming from, and proving that you care.*

*To make it work, greet them nicely, act professional, and flex that compassionate muscle. Show them to their table, offer a free drink or some water, and then give them some space to scan the menu in peace. That's it.*

*By following these simple steps, you can create a great bond with the angry customer, and they'll want to come back to Din Tai Fung for more. Plus, once they're full and happy, they won't be angry anymore.*

*And it's time to say goodbye to the grumpy bird, and hello to a pleased customer who's feeling good.*

(I have learned, sometimes having a high Emotional Intelligence (EI), which means knowing how to control your own feelings and getting where others are coming from, is more helpful than just having a huge brain.) Thank you manager Leslie for your wonderful input.

## *Lesson 43*

### **Sail on! Fellow Overseas Workers**

Hello fellow overseas workers! I want to encourage you all to continue on your journey with courage and perseverance, no matter where you may end up. I know it can feel overwhelming at first, like a ship without cargo longing to find a safe haven.

Some of us have landed in snowy wharfs or oil-rich offshore areas, while others are working as land-based contractual laborers. Despite our differences, we are all skilled and valuable contributors to the workforce.

With my Kabayan, take pride in our hard work, as we are the unsung modern heroes of our motherland. While it is unfortunate that we often bear the burden of labor-intensive tasks, we must remember the importance of managing our finances wisely. It's crucial to distinguish our necessities from our materialistic desires, so we can avoid starting from scratch in the future.

Thanks to WiFi and modern communication, we can stay in touch with loved ones even when apart, but we must also acknowledge the years of separation they have brought. Let's cherish these virtual conversations and not dwell on feelings of guilt. Let's be cheerful and remember that with the necessary sacrifices, we can achieve the future of our dreams.

As fellow overseas workers, let's support each other and persevere through any challenges or nostalgia that may arise. We can all contribute to our country's economic stability and make our dreams a reality.

## **Pre-bus Task For Instant Promotion**

One of the managers asked me if I could do a quick favor and pre-bus some tables. I wasn't exactly sure what that meant, but it didn't really matter because he had to rush off to the office.

So, I continued my work and kept wondering about this new term. During my lunch break at the food court, I couldn't help but ask my trusty friend, Mr. Google, what pre-bus means. And guess what? I learned that it's all about clearing up dirty plates, glasses and trash quickly without interrupting the guests until they've finished their meals. How cool is that?

And not only does it help the restaurant turn tables faster, it also makes the dining experience better for the guests. Although, in my head, it did sound a little like an indirect way of saying 'Time's up, everyone,' but who knows? Either way, I'm happy to have learned something new today!

I was curious and typed again, ' Why cleaning a table is called bussing?' Without hesitation, Mr Google replied, 'The term 'bus' actually originated in America and refers to 'omnibus boys' who were responsible for doing everything in the restaurant.'

Wow! To have the ability to do everything in a restaurant sounds pretty awesome. So it seems like the trolley guy becomes a bus boy - a valuable member of the restaurant staff who can handle multiple tasks. That's quite an instant promotion!

## **Goodbye Pandemic, DTF Massage Is Back**

Hello, wonderful colleagues! I have some exciting news for you all - we now offer again a DTF quick chair massage for just 10-15 minutes, brought to you by yours truly! Not only can these quick massages result in both physiological and psychological changes, but they can also be compared to the benefits of an hour-long Swedish massage at your favorite spa.

So, don't forget to make time for a quick massage during your breaktime at your assigned shop. And for those of you looking to maximize the benefits, try using some delicious strawberry oil alongside your massage therapy. Trust me, treating yourself to a massage can help reduce stress levels, improve your mood, and even provide relief from depression and anxiety.

Who wouldn't want better sleep and to become more social? So, let's get ready to feel rejuvenated and refreshed!

Again, my dear colleagues, when you treat yourself to a massage, it's not just your muscles that benefit! You'll enter a state of relaxation that can also have a positive impact on your emotions. It's common to respond with laughter, storytelling, or even sharing memorable moments - creating a sense of connection and positivity.

Scientifically, less stress equals less anxiety which, in turn, can lead to less depression. By reducing stress, you can improve your job performance and overall happiness.

So, my dear, let's unfold now the chair and boost our well-being together! (And never mind who will massage me later).

## Lesson 46



### **The Wok Man, Kitchen's Master Tosser**

*(Inspired by Chef Allan Guerrero in the pictures and thanks to Food Expo Angelo for inputting me about wok pan topic)*

I never knew I could witness food being thrown around while cooking, except in movie ads. But today, as I walked by the DTF kitchen, I was surprised by what I saw. A chef was tossing fried rice and some food inside a wok pad - almost like it was about to be thrown overboard - but then it went right back to its original position on the high side pad.

I am so curious about the chef's skills, how his wrist manages to toss the food perfectly like that.

DTF kitchen becomes cooler when there's a stir fry master rocking a wok - seriously, it's amazing. The wok's got those high walls that keep all the ingredients inside, while the chef flips everything upside down.



And once that wok heats up on a controllable fire and starts sizzling, the whole kitchen feels like it's alive!

And guess what? Not a single drop falls on the floor. What a skillful food catch!

Catch these quotes after a long hours work:

Writing during breaktime is not just a stress-buster but also a source of inspiration. Here are some of my favorite quotes that I jotted down during breaks.

*"Aiming high is ambitious, and with hard work and perseverance, achieving the impossible is not a far-fetched dream."*

*"Working hard may seem tiring, but the sense of satisfaction after completing a task is worth the effort. Eventually, hard work will become a passion."*

*"Food is not just nourishment for our body, but it also feeds our soul. Nothing beats the feeling of relishing a delicious meal, except maybe writing a book about it."*

*"Every newcomer has the potential to excel in their respective field. We were all new to this company once and had the same disorientation and jitters. But with perseverance and determination, we can achieve greatness."*

## The Chef Wisdom Thoughts of Allan Guerrero

*(The former electrician turned out to be a DTF chef.)*



"Don't wait for extraordinary opportunities. Instead, let us give high regards to the ordinary occasions that come our way. Let us recognize the value in their common nature and nurture them. By doing so, you can achieve great results. Remember, it is only weak individuals who wait for opportunities, whereas the strong ones create them." These thoughts DTF chef Allan told me that I had rephrased.

These words hold immense power and should serve as a reminder for us all. They provide no reason for us to complain about our jobs or the situations we find ourselves in. Sometimes, certain aspects of our jobs may not align with our skill or nature. However, if we understand

where these differences lie, we can diminish their negative effects. We can make adjustments to our new found jobs, adapting ourselves to fit the circumstances rather than expecting the circumstances to match to us.

The same principle applies to relationships, sounds interesting, my brother. In the beginning, adjustments are necessary to make things work harmoniously. What truly matters is our commitment to continuous learning and growth. The more knowledge we acquire, the greater our earning potential becomes. Never stop improving, my friend.

These profound insights stem from the wisdom of my dear friend, Allan Guerrero. He is currently working as a chef at DTF-AGC branch, but was previously a certified electrician by profession.

Thank you for your kindness, my INC bro. Remember, the kindness we extend to the world will always come back to us. Cheerssssss!!!!

## **Behind The Ego**

Everyone has got some ego, it's just a part of being human. You can't escape it, it's ingrained in us all. I think the ego is one of the genuine emotions that we have. So basically, ego is behind every emotion we feel. Whether you love someone, hate someone, or just being friendly, it's all thanks to ego.

Now, I'm not saying ego is a terrible thing. Too much of it is bad, just like anything in excess is bad - even things like being friendly, it's bad, people will abuse you. So, in my opinion, ego isn't all that bad, it's just having too much of it that's the problem. But here's the tricky part - how do you know if you've got too much ego? It can get pretty confusing, you know? Your idea of excess might be different from someone else's.

So, how can you tell if your ego is too much? Well, if your ego brings you joy without hurting others, then it's all good. For me, there's no problem in it. I mean, your ego shouldn't cause harm to someone else. For instance, if a colleague makes a harmless joke or personal comment about you and you just ignore it, that's a sign of a healthy ego. But if you let that joke or motivational comment but you believe it really bruise your ego, then you seek revenge by hurting your colleague, that's definitely too much ego.

So, as long as your ego brings you positivity, push you to work harder and aim higher, boost more self-esteem, and confidence, without harming others, it's all good. But if ego starts causing trouble, you better watch out!

*"No matter what other people think of me, whether I am a dreamer, a visionary, a crank, a wind talker as long as I believe in myself that I can be GREAT like SOMEBODY in history; I keep doing, without hurting others who doesn't believe in me. And I still respect their opinion and feelings towards me." Try to say this mantra to others not too close as your best friend, these line thoughts is construed as ego expressions.*

I fully concur with the sentiment expressed in the previous statement, however, it is important to acknowledge the fine distinction between positive and negative ego. Determining which one carries more weight is not obligatory. Instead, it is advisable to exercise extra careful when sharing our accomplishments with colleagues, as it may be misconstrued as boasting. By carefully choosing our words and body language, we can simplify our interactions.

In managing both personal and professional aspects of life, it is crucial to recognize the influence of body language as well. In certain situations, expressions like mine can often be misinterpreted as signs of insecurity, stress, or even immaturity. Therefore, it is essential to handle this matter with extra care and empathy, in order to foster a harmonious work environment. Let us maintain prudence and ensure that our workplace and relationships with our colleagues remain productive and comfortable.

Remember that the words we speak, as I have learned, have an impact on ourselves and others. Even though it may not be intended to cause harm, our approach can be misconceived as an attempt to showcase superiority. I apologize for any misunderstanding that may arise from this.

*Please remember that our goal should be to strive for personal growth or a better version of oneself, rather than to prove ourselves better than others. However, sometimes, we are misunderstood in showing this due to our unintentionally misleading approach.*

## Customer Bag Storage Basket

I recently had the pleasure of inviting my former colleague Jason from Feet First massage center at Ibn Batutta mall branch to dine at Din Tai Fung restaurant. During our visit, Jason was pleasantly surprised by the wait staff placing his knapsack onto the bag storage basket, turning an old item into a treasure. While looking at the menu, I couldn't help but share with him the delicious signature dish offered at DTF. Although Jason was occupied with the menu, he discovered that some items were unavailable, so we opted for the amazing Hong Kong style roast duck, which is one of the best meat dishes that this global brand restaurant has to offer.

He probably thought it was a '*pulutan*' - a delicious finger food to pair with drinks. Next, he couldn't resist checking out the chicken chow mein or the mouthwatering stir-fried noodles. Then, he was intrigued by the sautéed string beans, the best green beans he just had to try. He imagined their lovely crunch and savored the aftertaste on his tongue. Yummy!

While waiting for the server, Jason connected to the WIFI and enjoyed strong signals that made him forget about the waiting time. Finally, the menu arrived and it was chow time. After indulging seemed in a Taiwanese food festival, Jason let out a hearty burp. He couldn't help but share his amazing experience with his friend and they cheered with a fist pump.

As we were saying our goodbyes, Jason had an incredible experience exploring different foods with us. However, he accidentally left behind his knapsack in the treasure-keeping basket.

It happens to the best of us, but it was a reminder that we should always remember our belongings, especially while enjoying new experiences.

## Lesson 49

### DTF Calling Card



Wow, what a thoughtful and creative calling card! When my colleague handed me this beautiful red card, I couldn't help but feel impressed. It's not like any other business card I've seen before. It has all the essential branding details like the company name, logo, and tagline, but what sets it apart is the personal touch.

As I read the card, I felt like my colleague was saying, 'I'm here for you.' The card also has their new mobile number, making it easy for me to reach out anytime. It's a great reminder that we all need a shoulder to lean on sometimes.

I feel lucky to have such a friendly and caring colleague-friend who said, that whenever you may be feeling discouraged or overwhelmed, remember to stay strong. Your good health and well-being is not only important for yourself, but also greatly valued by those who may be struggling with illness abroad. Instead of feeling upset, try to focus on

the positive aspects of your situation. Remember the reasons why you chose to work in Dubai and be grateful for the job opportunity that you have. Your comfortable living arrangements are something that many people without a home would dream of having.

The card also had a poignant message urging me to remember all that I do have, even during challenging times. As I read it, I felt grateful for this reminder and acknowledged the truth in its words. I tucked the job-description card into my wallet as a personal keepsake to remind me of the positive aspects of my life.

And, a day later, I received the news that my DTF contract had been renewed for the fourth time. I was filled with gratitude and appreciative of my now life consultant's practical advice.



## **Buzzer-beeper**

As I found myself lost in thought, I was abruptly interrupted by the buzzing of the DTF buzzer-beeper device. Despite having many things to ponder, my attention was drawn to the electrifying pager, which blinked with lightning-effects like that of a digital movie poster, buzzing away in my pocket.

After all, it was my turn to go on the weekend food trip. As the restaurant vibrator went off, I made the respectful decision to shut down my tablet Scrabble game so that I could keep an attentive eye on the restaurant staff bustling in and out of the wide open entrance-exit door, while being fully immersed in the desire to serve.

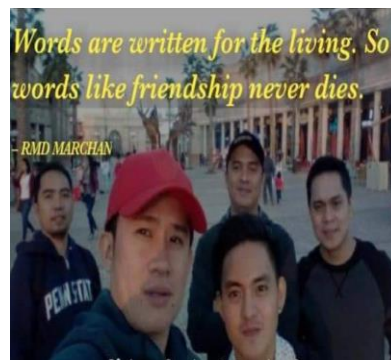
Upon arriving at DIN TAI FUNG, the staff greeted me warmly and politely inquiring if I needed a table for one. After expressing my needs, I thanked the hostess who retrieved the buzzing device, signaling my table was ready for me to enjoy the delightful meal ahead.

It is often necessary to encounter a challenge or obstacle that pushes us beyond our comfortable routine to truly awaken and reach our potential. It is in our comfort zone where our dreams often wither and die. Opportunities may not always present themselves in obvious ways and may appear as setbacks or difficulties. It is important to remain open-minded and not overlook these opportunities, even if they initially seem like a nuisance or inconvenience.

## Team Builder Manager Rodel III

Isn't it wonderful to realize that in the word TEAM, there is no letter "I"? This simply means that teamwork cannot be achieved by one person alone. Together, we can accomplish great things and reach our goals as a whole.

The DTF staffs had the opportunity to rekindle the spirit of teamwork through fun and interactive activities such as beach volleyball, group dance contest, and parlor games held at Jumeirah (Burj Al Arab) open beach on December 18, 2019. Kudos to team leader Rodel Asay III, the former DTF now Han Shi Fu restaurant manager, for organizing such amazing activities. The experience was truly remarkable as nobody stood out as an individual and everyone worked together to achieve one common goal - to build up the DTF team with a strong sense of camaraderie. It was an outdoor activity that broke down personal barriers and left us feeling optimistic about the future of our team.



## **Gadget Causes Advanced Fatigue**

When I was a kid I thought that being in love with someone, is having with that person who would be the last thing I want to see before closing mine eyes to sleep. And the same thing I could be seen first on the following morning. When I grow older I have learned that the last thing and the first thing having with me from dusk until dawn, is the CELPHONE.

Anyone can relate this poor habit, which causes mostly the company staffs, are so tired to wake up. And upon working on duty, they have no energy, over fatigue due to lack of sleep. We should minimize using phone in bed or if possible turn the radiation off before sleeping.

*iPhone....deceive me not. You're no longer the APPLE of mine eye.*

I need to rest early. I have morning shift schedule for tomorrow at DTF MOE. I should avoid tardiness, or being late. I should follow a scheduled routine to get productivity out of the running clock. Because for me, TIME, not the APPLE gadget, is the greatest asset anyone can use efficiently to change life. And TIME is the one thing I can't get back.

I have learned now not to prioritize connecting with our electronic device too much. I don't want to becoming zombie-like and wondering why I feel tired even without working yet. Instead of excessive YouTube exploring, sleep early and that truly matters. Meaningless sleepless nights exhaust us more than hard work.

*Thank you so much to my wonderful new friend and colleague, Deepal Chinthaka from Sri Lanka! He is not only an incredible reader, but also has a real passion for discovering new books and writings of mine! I truly appreciate our instant connection.*

## **Food Expo, The Restaurant Middle Man**

*(Credit to food handler Angelo)*

I couldn't help but feel amazed when I learned about the important role of the Food Expo or food handler at DTF. It was fascinating to learn about the careful process that the food goes through, and how the Food Expo is responsible for preparing it in accordance with set standards. It's not just about presentation, but also verifying that the covering, tidiness, and hygiene are up to standard.

I was impressed by the way that the food runner acts as a friendly liaison between the waiters and chefs, and by their attention to detail when it comes to hygiene, from wearing hairnets and gloves to carefully carrying the food on trays with pacing steps. This reminded me of how important pacing is in handling matters in life as well - it's all about taking a pause and not rushing through everything. Slowly but surely.

Thank you to Food Expo Angelo for sharing this valuable information with me. I feel more educated about restaurant operations now.

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*(Speaking of exposition, it brings me great joy to be able to expose these quotes to you and hopefully inspire you in your own DTF journey.)*

### **Quotes for DTF Journey**

*Dimsum, you are undeniably delicious and I'm sure you'll leave a lasting impression on those you meet.*

*When you feel exhausted from work, take the time to rest. Think of it like a pit stop for a racing car - a chance to change tires, refuel, and catch your breath. Don't worry about your conceding speed, like Food Expo slow steps, what matters is that you never give up.*

*Listen to your colleagues and try to see things from their perspective.(The way I do upon writing this book. I keep on listening their DTF experiences.) We all want to hear good things for ourselves and for each other.*

*It's so enjoyable to explore the realms of fantasy and reality when dining at staff eating area. The fantasy about imagining a long vacation break after good meal. The reality about getting back to work, after a quick meal break.*

*If you feel overwhelmed with work-load related emotion, know that it's okay to cry without tears. But try to remember that you're capable of so much more than you think.*

*Treading your own arduous path can be a difficult, but it ultimately makes you stronger. At least you have a path to walk through, though not as smooth as you dream of.*

*Quarter of my life is a DTF journey and my colleagues believe it too.*

*You've already accomplished so much at DTF and I know you'll continue to do amazing things more in the future.*

*It's not about how far you've come or where you're going, but rather taking the time to ask yourself, are you have enough nap during breaks? Recharge please!*

*Remember, taking breaktime and getting enough rest is just as important as working hard. You may feel exhausted when you don't take breaks, but you also understands the importance of not neglecting rest. It's all about finding a healthy balance between work and rest to maintain your energy and productivity!*

## Is There Any Thin Chefs?

May I respectfully ask if you have observed a slender or thin chef working in the kitchen? If yes, it appears that his food may not be meeting the expected level of taste. However, it's important to note that the size of a chef doesn't determine their cooking abilities. Rather, it's the quality of their dishes that defines them, not the size of their waistline. Right?

Personally, I always thought that a chef with a solid build, is a sign of a good cook - you know, because you are what you cook (from you eat what you are, never mind!) But maybe that's just me?

Then try to step into the kitchen and feel the liveliness of the atmosphere! You'll be greeted by a diverse range of chefs' assistants - some skinny, medium-sized, and even some bigger helpers! Plus the sizzle of the stoves, the clanging of the pots and pans, the gentle settling of silverware on plates, and the satisfying melody of the pressure cooker whistling away- all these mixed scenes make you feel more curious about *why kitchen helpers prefer different sizes*.

However for those *chefs, the heads of the kitchen, size does matter*, because after all, again, what you cook makes you who you are!

## **The Proactive Manager Richard Chavez**

I had the pleasure of meeting Richard, my manager at DTF Dubai Mall, on my first day of work. Richard is a very empathetic and proactive manager who understands that during busy peak hours, employees' emotions can run high. Due to the pandemic, we have fewer staff members to maintain social distancing. Richard has a fantastic ability to calm down his team members during these stressful times, just by his presence.

One time, I saw him resolve a conflict between two staff members, Amjad and a kitchen helper, by actively listening to both sides and encouraging a compromise. Richard prioritizes creating a positive and productive workspace for everyone, and I am learning a lot from him.

Note: a proactive employee thinks ahead, seeking solutions for any problems that arise without waiting for direction. They consistently work towards achieving the best results, and invest additional thought and effort into every task completed. The point here is that a chill and proactive manager like Richard, when a problem arises, he doesn't tell it to the higher management like your lollipop was stolen. But rather he knows how to report it with a solution on hand.

From that acquired knowledge, I have pondered that being proactive must have a cool attitude, and here I write:

*Maintain a chilling (relax) attitude regardless of how many years you've spent working abroad. As you make your way back to your company accommodation, after a long day of work and lay in your shared room, carry a cool aspirations in your heart. You have not given up despite the challenges you face.*

*Every morning, greet the rising sun with a warm smile as you prepare to tackle your daily responsibilities at the restaurant, unless it's your day off. Enjoy your off, sleep well.*

*In moments of homesickness, remain resolute and remember that you are here to support your family back home. Be willing to make sacrifices and pick yourself up every time you fall emotionally.*

*When the road gets rocky, such as having a tough day with customers or struggling with job performance, take a moment to pause and slow down instead of reacting impulsively hot based on your emotions. Remember, high emotions lead to low IQ. Avoid making any decisions when you're feeling overly emotional. It results disaster.*

*Having emotional intelligence is essential to success for all individuals, including those who may be considered geniuses. Ignoring the importance of emotions can result in arrogance, insanity, and even suicide.*

*Therefore, it is necessary to confront emotional challenges with cool courage, as with enough practice, what once seemed like an obstacle will transform into a stepping stone towards achieving your goal. Chill!!!!!!!*



## **Happy Work. Happy Life. Happy Bao Bao.**

Have you ever been curious about why some people wouldn't choose to be happy when it's a clear choice? Many seem to prioritize pleasure as a lifestyle, but it often leads to a lack of satisfaction. I've asked my colleagues if they're happy before, but the answer can vary depending on circumstances and even their own perspectives.

However, I believe that accepting oneself is one key to being happy. It means being at peace with your flaws and supporting yourself, even through mistakes and hardships. While this can be challenging, it's important because it allows us to stop rejecting ourselves and fosters better acceptance from others. Ultimately, self-acceptance leads to feeling good about ourselves, comfortable with our colleagues, and feeling grateful to our company. The result is: Happy work. Happy life. And a .....

Happy Bao Bao.



## *Lesson 57*

# **Connecting The Dots**

Have you ever considered that saying 'if I am rich, I have no problem' may not be entirely truthful? And what if you were raised with fame, would that prevent you from working as hard as you do now?

Let's not complain about what our future may hold based on our current situation. Instead, let's embrace the fact that we are not created to complain about what we don't have and recognize that we are all heirs of our poor motherland.

We all have different experiences in life, with some experiencing misfortunes that others may view as luck. It's all a game of puzzle and chance, but those who can connect the dots from their past experiences can pave the way for a prosperous future.

After all, our past serves as a pattern and precedent to avoid future failures.

Now, still breaktime. Multiple quotes to remember:

Find joy in pursuing your passions and know that even though there may be challenges, the love for what you do will always outweigh any hardship that comes your way.

Let's make an effort to listen more attentively and show respect for other's views and comments. This will not only benefit them but also earn us self-respect.

Embrace the feedback and critiques of your work - it's an opportunity to grow and improve, and get one step closer to perfection.

The most wonderful thing about being passionate of what you're doing like in cooking, is hearing someone say, 'You are amazing!' It's a boost of luck and confidence that reminds you to believe in yourself, like

*On my writing.....*

Just keep writing in that journal of yours. It's a silent way to speak loudly from your soul, and it's a much cheaper therapy than most!

Writing is such a powerful art, and there's nothing more heartbreaking than failing to tell a story that truly captivates.

A book is a rare treasure, a moment when the pages come to life in your hands and the words fill your senses with the aroma of fresh flowers. It's a feeling that never fades.

*Back to you DTF colleagues,*

Never lose hope, rather stay optimistic, even when you feel like your self-worth is being diminished. And face your inner demons and work towards being productive. Then gain self-respect and improve your self-esteem.

Not all breathtaking experiences require a climb up a hill. Some can be found right where you stand either in pantry or in back kitchen. It is in the moments when you stop overthinking; start truly living.

Life without challenges is like a stock room with blank walls - dull and uninspiring.

Let's raise a toast to trusting the process, which may not always be a bed of roses, but teaches us important lessons along the way.

## *Lesson 58*

### **DTF Employees' Quick Tidbits**

Let's spread some positivity in the workplace! Here are some quick tidbits to keep in mind:

- Embrace cultural differences and try to maintain a cool head during conflicts.
- Avoid procrastination and strive for self-discipline. Finish what you started!
- Find joy in your job and appreciate it while you have it.
- Take initiative and be a self-starter. Prioritize your tasks and always look for ways to improve.
- Work diligently and focus on competing with yourself, not others.
- Let your hard work speak for itself. Patience is key, but rest assured that recognition will come to those who deserve it.

The whole point of being good employee is to just be a cool colleague, you know? Help out others when you can by being a positive influence. Don't worry about sharing small stuff away, because it is not cost you anything. It just makes the working environment a better place. And when you're giving like snacks food and moral thoughts, make sure to do it with a smile and thank other colleagues when they do the same for you. Being nice and friendly will make you feel good too.

## *Lesson 59*

### **Bulletin Minds**

I can't help but be curious about how many staff members have been inspired by the beautiful minds behind the quotes posted on our bulletin boards. I wonder just how many bulletin boards have touched the exhausted souls of our team members and renewed their strength.

Whenever I come across a bulletin board, whether it's in the DTF dining area or the manager's office, I always find myself asking these questions. You see, bulletin boards aren't just meant for decoration or for pinning up announcements and schedules. They can serve as a source of inspiration and motivation for our staff members, with powerful quotes and important information that align with our company's goals.

In fact, I recently came across some interesting thoughts and trivia on our DTF bulletin boards that I'd like to share with you:

#### ***The PHILOSOPHY OF DIN TAI FUNG***

**\*Quality is the lifeblood of the business.**

**\*Branding means responsibility.**

**\*The key to perfect service lies in attention to detail.**

**\*Daily sales target are not everything.**

#### ***ALWAYS REMEMBER THE 3 DO NOT***

**1. We do not MAKE substandard food.**

**2. We do not DELIVER substandard food.**

**3. We do not SERVE substandard food.**

DIN - Refers to an ancient cooking vessel.

(It symbolizes that we are a restaurant)

TAI - Refers to peaceful.

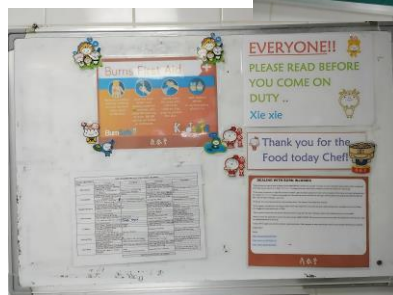
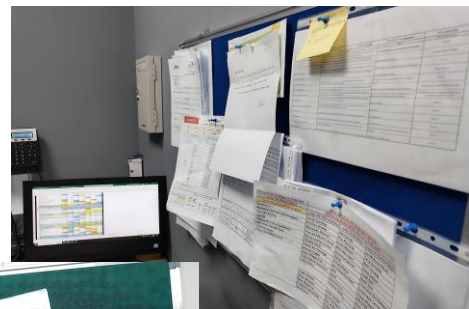
(We wish to have a peaceful interaction with  
our customer)

FUNG - Refers to prosperity or abundance.

(We hope our restaurant service continues to improve in abundance)

Hi everyone! please clean as you go.....

*(Try to visit there, and you can see more things like here!)*



## **Good Friend Turn Over**

In the bustling staff dining area, a friendly face made its way towards me. "Good morning, GOOD FRIEND!" she exclaimed with a smile. Returning the greeting, I couldn't help but wonder where I had met this delightful lady before.

To my surprise, she introduced herself as my new student, Pooh from Myanmar, eager to learn the ins and outs of setting up plates and cutlery in every section. Her excitement was contagious as she expressed how thrilled she was to be under my tutelage for the next few days.

As we chatted, it became clear that Covid-19 was slowly but surely winding down. The fact that I had a new Good Friend assigned as my proxy was a clear sign that things were returning to normal.

I was so delighted when Pooh introduced me to her partner both at work and in life, Thuzar from Myanmar. They both greeted me with warm smiles and it was evident that they were already becoming great colleagues of mine. I had a good feeling about them from the start. They were friendly, composed, and always stayed calm even when faced with pressure.

They were thoughtful and considerate, and not just focused on earning a living but also on learning to live their lives abroad. I felt incredibly lucky to be working with such a cheerful and positive duo as Pooh and Thuzar.

## Lesson 61

### **United Hands**

*(means people joining together or working together towards a common goal)*

DTF has a wonderful tradition of bringing our hands together in a circle before starting our tasks. This small act symbolizes unity and reminds us that by working together, we can achieve wonderful things.

Our staff members at DTF show this unity by circling their hands per shift before heading to their respective sections. It's important to remember that teamwork is key to achieving success.

During one of these hand circling gatherings, I curiously asked



Amjad, a pantry staff from India, what the significance of this tradition was. He informed me that it's also an opportunity for the section leader to check our nails and ensure they're trimmed.

So, in addition to promoting unity, this tradition also reminds us to maintain our personal hygiene. Good to know!



## **Dynamite Shrimp**

I wonder if there is dynamite beef or dynamite mutton. Anyway, I must share with you the amazing experience of trying the Dynamite Shrimp appetizer. With each bite, I had met with a burst of flavor that was both satisfying and addictive.

The crispy texture of the flour-coated shrimp paired with the spicy mayo sauce made for a truly delightful combination. I couldn't resist indulging the glorious dish placed before my very eyes.

Each mouthful was a pleasant surprise, leaving me astonished at just how delicious it was. Like a dynamite, I was blown away by its delicious explosion which wanting my salivating palate to order more.....

*After blowing away with Dynamite Shrimp, allow me to have a break. And getting back to my passion: The writing.*

*Writing during duty break, is better than a cup of coffee and a puff of cigarettes. Here are some quotes I have written while on break.*

Aiming higher position, higher compensation, higher incentives within the company without promotable work performances yet, is like catching the moon. Unlike you're a rock star employee, having robust accomplishments, then it's gonna be easier for you to reach the sky. Just keep working diligently, you have the right to shine, in due time.

Work harder until hard work becomes a labor of love.

The next best thing to eating quality of foods, and after enjoying the best dining experiences at DIN TAI FUNG restaurant, is writing a book about it.

Never underestimate any new comer staffs, because the moment we also started in our company, we were once a newbie, disoriented yet to the policies and facilities, but have potentials, and capabilities waiting to be excelled.

Be a beacon of inspiration for all co-staffs, to new and old one, to high or low rank: Project good attitude towards them. This ideal character enhances your professional growth.

Additional :

In handling negativity, it is best to simply let it happen and then let it go. Trying to turn a negative situation into a positive one is not a foolproof method. Instead, a positive mindset can only be effective in dealing with negativity by refusing to be influenced, manipulated, or controlled by negative situations. Allow them to pass, as tomorrow offers a fresh start.

## Lesson 63



### **As Father and As Overseas Worker**

My DTF colleague posed an interesting question, asking me, 'Bla, what does a father mean to you?' To which I replied with a smile, 'Being a father is a wonderful gift that comes with a great deal of responsibility.'

It's not just about showing your children how hardworking you are by providing for them from afar. It's about leaving a legacy of kindness, teaching them important life skills, and helping them achieve their dreams. Above all, guiding them in the virtue of patience, no matter what struggles they face.

A strong and dedicated father knows how to balance both his work and his emotions without ever compromising his job performance. Even in the toughest moments, they can hide tears at workplace and keep a positive attitude with the support of colleagues and loved ones alike.



For my son Sean Leigh,

The only thing that separates us is Time. Sad but true. And I want to let you know that you were made to do hard things, and so was I. Therefore, like your father, believe in yourself.

As you grow older, you will understand what I mean. The world is treacherous, but not as tricky as the globe, an artificial perfect world, I have gifted to you.

Unlike Christopher Columbus' quote: 'By following the light of the sun, we left the Old World'. Ours, our world, we'll keep new forever.

With much love,

*Dadi*

I am consequently grateful that through DTF, I have been able to support the needs of my child. It dawned on me that DTF restaurant has also contributed to the well-being of numerous employees' families.

## **Metro TRAIN vs DTF MOE Branch**

Have you ever been curious about the similarities between a metro train and a busy restaurant like DTF-MOE? If not, then let's hop on. As the doors close on the metro train, the voice-over announces (in a casual voice): Doors closing, (then, in Arabic) Al abwab toghlaq!

Following this, the train departs to the sound of its engine. Zoouooooommmmm!

At the DTF-MOE restaurant, a buzzer-beeper sound alerts to the reserved customers, meaning it's their turn. As the customers enter, servers will greet them cordially with "Hello Welcome Ni Hao."

The metro then announces the upcoming station, let us say at the Union.

Train: (ding-dong) The next station is Union. Almahatat alttaliat hi alaitihad. This is an intersection between the red line and green line.

At the DTF restaurant, during peak hours, all tables are occupied by customers in a spacious yet bustling hall. Somehow, personal space is still respected.

In contrast, the train's cabins are cramped, and passengers stand holding onto strap-hangers. As passengers exit the train, others quickly take their seats, reading subtle body language for any opportunity.

Meanwhile at DTF, tables are quickly reserved even before a pre-bussing. Despite their differences, both the metro train and DTF restaurant are places where people gather for transportation and dining. And their bustling atmosphere is a testament to the popularity of both these establishments.

## **Dim Sum Is Therapeutic**

Opening the bamboo steamed basket, I was immediately hit with the delicious scent of shrimp. It's no wonder that this incredibly sensory experience inspired me to start my own food blog!

Interestingly, dim sum has a rich history that dates back to the Silk Road, where merchants sold small servings of food to hungry travelers.

Today, dim sum has evolved into a delightful culinary experience that touches the heart and delights the senses. More than just a satisfying meal, dim sum can soothe the senses and evoke positive emotions and memories. In short, dim sum is something truly therapeutic.



I tried another one, the crab dumpling, part of dim sum, and it was amazing. I used my bare, sanitized hand to pick it up and took a big bite. The texture was soft and juicy with a chewy center that just melted in my mouth. I have never tasted anything so hearty and flavorful before. It was simply succulent.

## **Reflection: Haste Is Waste**

*(Don't rush, huwag magmadali said Pafa James Ramos)*

It is a well-known proverb that haste often leads to waste of time, effort, or money. I was reminded with this wisdom from my respected colleague "papa" James Ramos who advised me on the issue.

Papa James cautioned me against hasty actions, citing a situation in which I quickly and carelessly unloaded and loaded dirty plates and glasses on my Good Friend trolley at DTF restaurant during the pandemic period, leading to broken items and delays in operations. He emphasized that quick actions often result in inefficiency and wastage, as exemplified by the aforementioned situation. This advice stayed with me and has helped me make crucial decisions. I firmly believe that avoiding hasty decisions is key to preventing costly mistakes. It is wise to take the time to plan and think through our actions thoroughly before executing them, especially in cases of crucial decisions such as career contract renewals.

Thank you papa James for not being stingy with your beautiful advice. I know you're one of the mentors among DTF staffs because of your lengthy experiences at the company and also by your age (hehehehe seniority bah!). Keep it up! Greatness is not selfish.

More wisdom please because sometimes I need a friendly push to keep moving forward. I am just human, I can stop if I feel tired.

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## **Manager Gelene DTF Abu Dhabi Base**

In the earlier phase of writing my second book, *Geography of My Life*, I had the honor of speaking with Manager Gelene, who currently works at DTF Abu Dhabi. She graciously shared with me valuable insights about restaurant customer service, from warmly greeting diners to ensuring their satisfaction upon coming and departing.

I was deeply grateful for her expertise and overwhelmed by the knowledge she shared. I incorporated these experiences into my book as a testament to DTF's journey and as a personal addition to my journal.

I have learned that having positive shared experiences with others can make us feel more connected to the company, and being valued among the colleagues and fulfilled as an individual staff.

It can even improve our self-confidence and reduce negative emotions like anxiety or loneliness. Remember, it's important to share experiences with a variety of people, not just those we already know or who are similar to us.

Thank you manager, that's a great learning experience!

### ***Learning at DTF Lectures is Superpower***

Several times, I have observed Ms Gelene having a training lectures at the DTF VIP room, which take place for both new and old DTF staffs. This motivates me and reinforces the idea that transformation is essential in any profession.



It's important to always enhance our skills, similar to upgrading a gadget to prevent it from becoming obsolete.

DTF restaurant is dedicated to developing its staff into upgraded versions of themselves, even if they are already knowledgeable about their work.

Remember: knowledge is power, but **continuous learning is the Superpower**. This will keep DTF restaurant at the top of its game when it comes to providing exceptional customer service.

*(That's why I enrolled in a refresher course of MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint at Burjuman).*

Please note: Do not focus too much on the result. Enjoy and trust the process while on training and learning something new!

## **Company's Movie Treats**

*(Ms. Mariver and HR Rachelle were watching the movie with me)*

2018. At Coral Hotel, my restaurant company provided us with one of the most amazing treats: a private movie screening. We had the pleasure of watching RAMPAGE, starring Johnson the Rock and his albino gorilla named George.

The movie was action-packed with incredible special effects, a thrilling storyline, and hilarious dialogue. Despite being on the edge of my seat for the entire two hours, I couldn't help but laugh at the premise and silly lines.

The movie was so engaging that I had to take a few bathroom breaks, but thankfully my kidney stone didn't bother me. Although the setting was similar to King Kong's rampage in a city, I never felt bored and was captivated by the death-defying stunts. I can confidently say that there is no other movie like RAMPAGE featuring the Rock.

The movie ended on a fabulous note, with stunning digital effects and a cozy hotel atmosphere. We also had popcorn, chips, and juices to snack on, making it a well-deserved treat for all the hardworking staff.

## Lesson 69

# Nameplate

Your nameplate represents your hard work and potential, so why hide it away? It starts with cultivating a confident mindset and taking pride in your work, which your nameplate represent.

Trust in your abilities, focus on achieving your goals, and live without stress and doubt. As Christopher Morley once said, 'There is only one success, to be able to spend your life in your own way.' And, let's not forget that time is precious, so manage it wisely while bearing with your name, a treasure that couldn't be taken away even beyond your last breath.

Wear your nameplate with pride because your work is not just a duty, it's your way of making a meaningful contribution to a company that helps you lead a better life. Let your nameplate shine in a place where you feel valued and appreciated, where you can spread joy with a bright smile for all of your colleagues.



Choose to wear your nameplate in an environment that feels like home, where the weekdays fly by because you're too busy with work that you love. Be a part of a team of cheerful staff and experience a happy life.

## Lesson

### Wet Wipes



I can't help but wonder, are wet wipes meant to add moisture to a dry hand or just to cleanse and sanitize a damp one? Again, is wet wipes to wipe dry fingers or to wet the dry thumbs?

Either way, personally, I find it excessive to use them after every meal. However, I have to admit, there's something oddly satisfying about the scent of DTF wet wipes. It's like aromatherapy for my nose.

Ooooppppsssss! Breaktime again.

*Dear colleagues, just wanted to let you know that it's break time and I'm spending mine writing some sweet quotes.*

1) The next best thing to dining at DTF is expressing your love for food through quotations writing.

- 2) Cherish all the memories that involve eating at the amazing restaurant on earth.
- 3) As a leader at DTF, it's important to establish a bridge of flexibility with your staff before discussing serious matters.
- 4) Let's focus on positivity and always have a bright outlook, more in rushing hours.
- 5) The giant dishwashing machine was invented to help motivate kitchen staffs to achieve more in less time.
- 6) Stay close to the dimsum making kitchen and let its calmness bring you peace of mind.
- 7) With batch mates during dinner, it's common they ask, "Are you now living with your dreams?" Sad but true, not everyone may miss us or be interested in your arduous journeys yet.
- 8) Your personal goals should be a reflection of your own aspirations, beliefs, and values, not influenced by someone else's perspective. Remember that you are just as valuable as anyone else.
- 9) DTF wet wipes come with a pleasant scent and can be used for both wet and dry hands. This reminds us that life is simple yet complex at the same time.
- 10) If you desire to become stronger than before, take hopeful actions towards your goals.

Back to work!!!!

## **Gift-Giving Tradition**

I can't help but be curious about gift-giving, especially in the context of birthdays at work. It's interesting how the GIVER often benefits the most. While receiving a gift can signify love for the birthday celebrant, I wonder about the value of giving without expecting anything in return.

It's crucial to remember that gift-giving shouldn't be done with the intention of getting something back. When we give gifts to our colleagues, particularly those in positions of authority, solely for our own self-interest, it becomes more like bribery or extortion.

I've come to realize that true gift-giving is about giving freely, without any expectation of returned favors or recognition. We even have a term for the opposite approach - SIP-SIP, or Socially Inclined Person Sighting Instant Promotion. In my experience, I've never seen this approach lead to positive outcomes.

So far, I have not yet observed any unethical behavior or selfish motives among my colleagues.

However, I have witnessed some common law couples exchange gestures, such as a boyfriend bringing flowers to his girlfriend in hopes of reconciliation. I'm sure we all understand what I mean. Hehehehe.

## **Human Resource Bullet Interview**

HR: Good morning! How are you today?

You're RMDM, right?

RM: Yes, that's me.

HR: That's great! Tell me a bit about yourself.

RM: Well, I have a lot of skills that aren't on my resume and I'm excited to bring them to this company.

HR: Fantastic! Why do you think you'd be a great fit for this company?

RM: I truly believe that my capabilities can be of service to this company.

HR: What's one thing you feel you could improve on?

RM: I guess I'm a bit of a workaholic, which has led me to burn out in the past.

HR: And what's something you're particularly good at?

RM: My workaholic tendencies also make me very detail-oriented and thorough in my job performance.

HR: Great! And what does job satisfaction mean to you?

RM: To me, job satisfaction means being able to contribute to the company in meaningful ways and receive recognition for my hard work. It's truly inspiring.

HR: On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate yourself?"

RM: "I would love to showcase my skills to you first, before rating myself. I believe in being humble and not overrating oneself."

HD: "What is your philosophy in life?"

RM: "Every day is a new challenge, and I embrace it with a cheerful attitude."

HD: "And last but not least, what motivates you?"

RM: "I am passionate about achieving success while having the mental creative freedom to do so."

HD: "So, is money not your biggest motivation?"

RM: "While I do have economic needs, money is not my only driving force. I believe that if you go only for money, money will run away. If you strive hard for a success, money will follow you."

HD: "Awesome! And you can start to massage DTF staffs tomorrow."



## **Public Holiday (PH), Means Writing Day**

### *Art of Successful Failure*

Yow, it's PH day! And you know what that means? "Private" Holiday. Hmmmm...(actually, it's Public Holiday, no work day!) Yeah, sounds right. However, PH for me is a time to write privately! And this cheerful piece for you was actually written in Rigga accommodation.

Let's talk about the art of successful failure. It's a topic that makes you scratch your head, right? We are all made to achieve great things, but some of us end up falling short. But why is that? Well, I have some thoughts that I'm excited to share with you!

Firstly, there are those who fail to even try. Of course, you can't succeed if you don't try to take the first step.

Then there are those who try and fail, and never attempt it again. They give up after just one try!

Others fail because they choose the wrong path. They either base their decision on emotions or follow others' suggestions, instead of following their own skills and passions.

Then there are those who have everything they need to succeed - talent, financial support, and a backup plan - but they fail to take action. They're just lazy dogs!

Lastly, some people lack the belief in themselves and their abilities. Even with a solid support system and financial stability, they don't have the confidence to achieve their goals. But let me tell you, with a little self-belief, the sky's the limit!

### Extra Endurance

During long day off, use the opportunity to write and remind yourself to never give up. Whether you're headed to your work area or settling into your accommodations. Always keep your dreams of building a house or providing your loved ones with better education at the forefront of your mind.

When faced with setbacks, it's important to learn how to pick yourself back up and keep going, even if you need to slow down for a moment.

Remember the guts and determination you had when you first started working abroad and use that same resilience to keep pushing forward. With a little extra endurance, you can achieve anything.

## **How To Be A Cook?**

I asked chef Sarwar on how to be a cook, and he had shared this to me:

Cooking is a skill that can be acquired through practice and instruction. While some individuals may have a natural talent for it, it takes dedicated effort to consistently improve.

Learning from experienced chefs and following recipes are helpful, but many creative chefs develop their skills while assisting a family member or room mates in the kitchen. Also enrolling at proper culinary art school to improve your cooking talent.

Ultimately, a love for cooking and preparing food for others is necessary to truly be an inspired chef.

How about if I was born as a talented cook, can I be the best chef?

Well perhaps the ability to cook amazing food is something you're born with, however, without plenty of practice and careful attention to the work of master chefs, your success in the kitchen may be limited.

As Thomas Alva Edison once noted, talent is just one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration. It's the dedication and hard work that ultimately turn a talented cook into an outstanding chef.

You know, it's okay to feel like cooking is not your forte upon realizing it. However, do not feel discouraged because cooking is not

just about having a natural talent for it. It is a skill that can be learned and developed over time with practice and patience.

Even the best Chefs were once beginners who also had to start from scratch. Besides, cooking is also considered an art form and there are schools dedicated to teaching the culinary arts. So who knows? With the right amount of passion and dedication, you might just surprise yourself and become a talented chef in your own right.

So what are you waiting for? Let's go to the kitchen. Of course, we'll do the cooking and chatting. Mind you, we will become the next famous chef from the Philippines, Boy Logro.

\* **Pablo Logro**, also known as **Boy Logro** or **Chef Boy** a famous celebrity chef.

## **Oil Burn Scars**

As I observe several kitchen cooks during my massage sessions, I am intrigued of several scars on their forearms.

I wonder if these scars are indicative of their experience in handling hot surfaces or these are a result of disregarding safety protocols while cooking, particularly when dealing with splattered hot oil.

Nonetheless, regardless of the underlying reasons, the scars on cook's forearms are a testament to their unwavering commitment, hard work, and passion towards the culinary arts, which span throughout their lifetime.

By the way, why won't I ask them personally. Hmmmmm.

And the kitchen staff asked me if I have scars. I told them that I have bear scars. In fact, I have more scars than they do. It just happens that my scars are not more visible than the kitchen staff. Like them, my scars, the invisible thing, are a symbol of survival, not an expression of any pain in the past but a mark of healing!

## **Confidence Defeats Fears Of Failure**

I recently had a lovely conversation with one of the DTF staff members while giving him a massage at Mall of Emirates. During our chat, he shared with me that he was feeling discouraged and lacked confidence anymore after failing his promotional exam three times.

I wanted to offer him some words of encouragement and let him know that it takes real strength to admit our weaknesses. Being willing to acknowledge what we don't know can actually boost our confidence.

I suggested that he try doing one thing every day that scares him to help rebuild his confidence. When I asked him what that thing might be, he mentioned studying and becoming more familiar with the DTF menu.

I wholeheartedly encouraged him to take on that challenge, step out of his comfort zone and read and study the assignment (menu) thoroughly.

And by religiously taking my brotherly advice, he passed the exam and received bonuses and incentives. He is grateful for my encouragement, but I said, it is you who help yourself. It is your confidence that defeats your fears of failure, which is why you succeeded. I also shared with him my valuable experiences, including my weak side in public speaking and how I overcame it.

As for me, I told him, I must admit that my English accent is not my strong suit and it can sometimes make me feel embarrassed in front of others. But with a bit of confidence and practice, I know little by little I can improve!

## **Filipino Singing Culture A Stress Reliever**

Isn't it amazing how cheerful and lively the Kabayan DTF staffs are, especially on their days off? They simply love karaoke singing and enjoying every moment of it.

Celebrating life and finding joy in the smallest of things is our way of life. We need not wait for special occasions like birthdays, parties, holidays, job promotions or new contracts to have a good time. Grab a microphone, connect to your smartphone, and sing along to your favorite tunes anytime you want - no judgment here! Except to sing My Way by Frank Sinatra. Kindly Google it to know why, and how deadly to sing that infamous song.

When you visit our accommodation, you'll see how we nurture this celebratory spirit through music and karaoke. Just remember to be considerate of sleeping roommates, unless you want to become an instant YouTube sensation! Singing has amazing benefits, as it triggers the release of happy hormones that simply make you feel wonderful.

So you know now how Filipinos have this rep for being the masters of karaoke. Well, it's not totally unfounded. There's a whole karaoke scene in the Philippines that's basically famous around the world.

Honestly, it makes sense. Singing is a big deal in Filipino culture, so it's no surprise that they're good at it.

And get this trivia: the guy who came up with the karaoke machine as we know it today is actually from the Philippines. His name is Roberto del Rosario, and he's the only one with a patent for a karaoke system.



Oh, and here's a fun fact: the whole point of karaoke is to let you sing along with your favorite songs while reading the lyrics. So go ahead and belt it out, no shame in the game!

Remember that Filipino learned to sing songs first even before learning how to read and write. Music especially western and Filipino songs is in every household.

*Singing boosts the feel-good hormone, improves mood, reduces stress, and enhances overall health. Singing on workday breaks is an excellent option!*

Singing with true friends is a source of stress relief. This is because a genuine friend appreciates your singing abilities, regardless of any vocal imperfections. Even when you feel like a cracked egg, they still see you as a good egg or kind-hearted, self-proclaimed good vocalist (that's what friends are for).



## **Front of House Sorry**

I noticed that front of house servers tend to utter an apologetic "Sorry..." whenever there's a low crash of plates or cutlery on the restaurant floor, or whenever there's a loud noise from something heavy falling in the kitchen. I have also heard this expression from food expo staff who accidentally spill soup on the tray before serving and need to go back to the kitchen for a refill, causing a delay to the waiting customers. Personally, I also apologize by saying "Sorry for that..." when I accidentally step on my colleague's toe while maneuvering my Good Friend trolley during rush hour.

Through this experience, I gained a valuable lesson that staying optimistic and apologizing for our small errors can go a long way in repairing relationships. Even the tiniest apologies can make a significant impact on maintaining positive connections with those we interact with daily. So, never hesitate to take responsibility for your mistakes and strive to become a considerate and compassionate person, particularly towards our customers.

I believe it's important for everyone to know how to apologize, whether it be to a customer or a superior. However, there's no need to stress about it! Sometimes a simple "SORRY" coupled with a smile can take care of everything. Additionally, don't hesitate to politely clarify any misunderstandings with a sincere explanation.

Another helpful tip we've shared in our group chat is for staff to apologize for any inconvenience caused when absent from work. This shows consideration for the impact it may have on the team.

And please forgive me for any confusion or delay caused by reading this lesson, and thank you for your understanding.

## The Motivational Speaker

I have to admit, I had a few doubts about my then upcoming speech. But instead of dwelling on the negatives, I decided to focus on my strengths - my personal experiences. I also believe that dressing up can make anyone feel confident and comfy - which can only help me while I'm on stage, Hmmmm, sounds in contrast of what I wore at that time.

And on top of that, I was looking forward to being surrounded by positive, uplifting people tomorrow. After all, who need negativity holding them back? So why worry?

I was determined to make the most of this opportunity and share my message with hundreds of eager listeners.



Then, finally, the long wait was over and I couldn't be more thrilled. On the day of the event, I felt fantastic and was at my charming best. The introductory remarks about the speaker, yours truly, at Han Shi Fu restaurant in the Aloft hotel Deira Dubai was incredibly pleasant. When the emcee handed me the microphone, I felt a surge of excitement in the back of my head. This was my moment to shine!



I had the pleasure of delivering motivational speeches for two consecutive days in front of CPRG Staffs, mostly from DTF, for an hour or two.

As I stood there, I felt confident and optimistic. I referred to my index paper, which held my thoughts on how to cultivate a positive mindset for highly effective people. And the rest is history...

## **Lesson Learned After The Speech**

*After delivering the speech, valuable insights were gained from the experience.*

The barrier.

Communication area for improvement lies in a poor articulation skills, which are currently not up to global standard or level. It is important for me to express myself clearly so that others can easily understand my words. However, my strong accent presents a significant barrier, despite my efforts in delivering persuasive and authentic speeches. Unfortunately, this accent often causes ambiguity and confusion, leading to misinterpretation.

The remedy.

The main thing I want to achieve by taking public speaking course is to kind of tone down my natural "*Bisaya*" accent. I really believe that that future program I'm planning to take will take a therapeutic approach to dealing with this "genetic condition"; having the hardest tongue on the planet. I'm not aiming to become a master at speaking like Americans or tackling tricky tongue twisters. I just want to be able to speak English fluently and clearly, without having to put in a lot of effort.

Burning desire.

As a Political Science graduate and a frustrated lawyer, I possess a honed skill in public speaking academically. With a strong personal affinity for it, I have a burning desire and great enthusiasm to deliver my thoughts to the public, firmly believing that I can influence their mindset, even if it's just by one percent. Unfortunately, when speaking on a global stage as I have mentioned earlier, I struggle to connect with international audiences due to my hard accent.

The emotions.

I have learned that my emotions vary depending on my audience. When speaking at my provincial university or in local settings in Mindanao Philippines, I feel extremely confident and optimistic despite any flaws. However, when addressing foreigners or in the NCR region or Manila, I lack the same level of confidence as in the previous scenario. My stage fright is in there even when I'm giving my speech. Honestly, there are times when I go completely blank while speaking because I'm so focused on choosing the right words and saying things correctly. It just doesn't come naturally to me.

The approach and adaptation.

My approach to adapting communication involves being aware of religious beliefs, avoiding political discussions, being mindful of economic contexts, choosing appropriate words to prevent dual meanings, particularly regarding gender equality or misogyny. I actively

listen to questions and handle them with care, while being cautious with humor or practical jokes. Sometimes it is offensive to others, but quite cool to some. So I am aware of this so-called "ice breaker" input. And I also prioritize maintaining eye contact, to establish a connection with the audience. However, I am aware that this style may not be suitable in certain countries where women are not meant to be looked at by men, so I extra exercise caution.

The struggle.

I have unforgettable experience about miscommunication before, when I talked with my previous British accent managers, they seemed to have a different understanding or way of speaking. Or maybe I didn't explain my message well to them. I struggled to grasp the context or catch the meaning of their idiomatic expressions. And to make matters worse, my tendency to be poetic can come across as strange or out of place to my colleagues. In other words, I'm not great at chatting or simple English conversation. Maybe it's because my mind is overloaded with sporadic thoughts or I've read too many books that "could sink a ship". This is one example that might make my colleagues raise an eyebrow and make them go, 'What ship? Titanic?' Then I have to rephrase it yet again. This side is my weak points in communication, too much idioms and poetry or Shakespeare lines.

The strengths.

Despite of having communication weaknesses, I have also positive sides. Here's my three communication strengths I gladly stress out. Firstly, I speak with absolute conviction, pouring my personal beliefs and aspirations into every word I utter. Secondly, I possess the natural ability to effortlessly persuade my audience, enchanting them with my authentic approach. Lastly, I rely on my vast experiences, which are firmly grounded in facts, and allowing me to speak confidently and make a lasting impact on my listeners, infusing my thoughts not only into their minds but deep into their very souls. To sum it all up, what is within my motivational or inspirational speeches is the premium! Thankfully, you forget my hard accent!

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*While writing this piece, I received a text message from my public speaking coach:*

*"Hi Marchan, good evening. My apology for the late reply as I had again back-to-back training and meetings today. Also, I got a piece of great news and I received an award, I was chosen to be part of the Top 100 Most Influential Filipino Women on LinkedIn. As long as you show first to me and I get the chance to read what you had written about me and my Training Consultancy, if I am okay with it, then I will let you know you can mention it on your book :)"*

## **Magnetic Experience at DTF 7th Floor Accommodation**

I vividly recall experiencing an intense gravitational pull while gazing down from the 7th floor of Rigga's DTF accommodation. The sheer strength of the force prompted me to recognize the potency of aligning one's goals with such determination. Whether these goals be daily, monthly, or even lifelong, they should magnetize and pull us towards them like gravity does. This mindset can help to eliminate procrastination, the detrimental practice of postponing tasks needlessly. Inspired by this magnetic realization, I showered with renewed enthusiasm and zealously prepared myself for a come back duties as DTF company body masseur, following years of enduring the pandemic.

I am pleased to inform you that I am bidding farewell to the Good Friend nameplate and my grey collared uniform bearing the embossed words Din Tai Fung.



*(My most memorable bed was in room C-76 at Rigga DTF accommodation, where I wrote two books during the pandemic period and I was also jobless.)*



## **Discipline Is Essential**

Living with multiple roommates in a company-provided accommodation can be a challenging experience. It is common to face difficulty in finding sufficient space to live together, particularly for situations involving six to eight individuals. In such circumstances, one might contemplate the best way to obtain a good night's sleep while living alongside people from various cultural backgrounds.

To live harmoniously with a diverse group of roommates, one of the critical components is maintaining discipline.

Discipline includes respecting each other's culture. It takes discipline to fixing up one's bed and shared space. It takes discipline to avoid procrastination or laziness. It needs discipline to refrain from making noise during others' sleeping hours

A disciplined staff can do a weekly task by cleaning the common bathroom, flat receiving area and kitchen, and treating others with kindness despite their personal differences.

## **Onion Tears/Onion Skin**

*Onion tears.*

As I massage one staff at DTF quarter room near the kitchen, I couldn't help but notice the rhythmic sound of a knife, tap-tap-tap, chopping a bunch of onions.

Curiosity got the best of me as I looked over and saw the kitchen helper, tears streaming down his cheek. I couldn't help but wonder, is shedding tears a regular occurrence for him? Or perhaps, is life like an onion, with struggles and tears being a necessary part of the process?

As I returned to the same location, the familiar sound of the tap-tap-tap of onion chopping and peeling greeted me. I realized that my tolerance for this harsh task had increased, causing no more tears to fill my eyes.

It seems that if we become too immune to the struggles in our lives, they lose their significance and become just another ordinary thing.

*Onion skin.*

It's interesting to note that when it comes to emotional reactions, having an excessively sensitive disposition or being easily offended by correction from our superiors isn't really necessary. As subordinates, it's important that we don't give in to tears, or having an onion skin reactions, when faced with disciplinary measures. Rather than being offended, that managerial advice is really an opportunity to learn from our mistakes and grow as individuals.

## *Lesson 84*

### **Make The Iron Hot, If It Is Not Yet Hot**

In my country, having a prestigious school background and high academic excellence standards are highly regarded when applying for work.

However, I have observed that in other countries, being diligent at work and gaining practical knowledge and skills are equally important and can lead to success and promotions. This has been a beautiful experience for me while working abroad.

As such, I would advise the youth who aspire to have a promising future to study harder and gain education, focusing on those that are essential and practical. It is vital to have the right knowledge and skills to succeed in your chosen field.

I have noticed that those who possess smart knowledge and a positive attitude, along with practical know-how, excel in life. It's not about waiting for something to happen but making things happen for you.

Have you ever heard the saying 'Strike while the iron is hot'? Now, what if the iron is not yet hot, you cannot strike it, right?

Well, only those with practical education, skill and knowledge are the one who make the iron hot by striking it. They don't just wait around for the opportunity to come to them, they actively seek it out and work hard to make an opportunity happen. If you're a hardworking fellow like them, the best rewards are sure to come your way!

That is why as I have learned the DTF company is really committed to providing the best possible training for all of its staff. They make sure that everyone has the skills and knowledge they need to excel in their roles.

New staff members undergo rigorous training and exams before they start work, and even existing staff are encouraged to upgrade their competencies. It's great to see a company that is always striking the iron, striving to maintain its highest standards and keep its momentum going!

## *Lesson 85*

### **Three Train Rides To DTF Nakheel Palm Jumeirah**

I must say, my first trip to DTF Nakheel Mall from Union Rigga Dubai was quite the adventure! It involved taking three different modes of transportation, but it was so worth it.

First, I hopped on a 35-minute metro train from Union to Sobha Realty station, which is conveniently connected to the Dubai Tram network. From there, I walked across the footbridge passing by Sheikh Zayed road to catch the Dubai Marina Tram that would take me to the Palm Jumeirah.

From Palm Jumeirah tram station I had to transfer to another transpo, the monorail. Though it was a bit of a hike to get to the first Palm Monorail station, passing by the Golden Mile Galleria was a great jump-off point for me. And let me tell you, the picturesque journey before approaching Al Ittihad Park and the lengthy Palm Jumeirah, which is undoubtedly an iconic Dubai neighborhood, was absolutely breathtaking.

At last, I arrived at my destination, Nakheel Mall, and got to enjoy my first duty as company body masseur at DTF NKHL branch. All in all, I must say that this three-train journey has made quite the impact and changed my perspective on commuting.

I truly appreciate the opportunity to embark on such a long and smooth journey, especially while listening to my favorite slow rock music on my trusty Bluetooth earbuds. It's amazing how travel can transport the mind into a meditative state.

I am uplifted every time I take a train ride. It reminds me that life is beautiful and there's always something new to explore. I choose to focus on my wishes to become better rather than wishing for fewer problems. By discovering and utilizing our full potential, we can work on ourselves and create personal growth. This realization has taught me that in order to succeed in our jobs, we must first work on ourselves. By developing skills and focusing on personal growth, job promotions and increased compensation will come naturally. Hard work will lead to a better living, but working on ourselves first will bring us good life and enjoyable journey as my another three train rides back home.

## Love To Be Hungry

May de Roxas, the section leader of DTF Dubai Mall, asked me: "Bla, are you hungry?" (Only friends can call me fondly "Blabla" based on the song Breezeblock by not-so-famous Alt-Z band, I often sing during party). And I replied to her that I was indeed hungry.

It's funny how working in a restaurant can make you immune to the menu and the delicious smells that constantly surround you. Despite this, I still love to be hungry, somewhat need to search for a new dish to eat.

However, I was experiencing a deep hunger that extends beyond the physical discomfort of my growling stomach that day. It was a hunger for personal growth and progress. A hunger to learn and improve every single day.

This hunger goes beyond simple cravings for delicious staff meal being served at dining area, and instead my hunger stems from a desire to become full in mind and body. That would be a fulfilled person, who has an equal hunger for foods and thoughts.

*By the way, why do DTF Friends Call Me Bla-bla?*

Here is the reason behind that fond calling. I must say, my voice can be quite unique at times, almost like a playful dog barking at the moon. However, I absolutely adore singing along to my favorite karaoke tune Breezeblock "blablabla" song of Alt-Z band, the one that earned me my beloved nickname. It always puts a smile on my face! They even

called blablabla on my Good Friend walkie-talkie before. What a great memories. Bla bla bla on the way.....Over! Copy that, copy that, blabla!

Isn't such a wonderful adventure pushing Good Friend trolley? Bla bla does not always expect everything to be easy and smooth, but embrace the challenges and hurdles with a positive attitude. Even when he encounters thorns and obstacles along the way, he has to keep moving forward like the wheels of his trolley, while enjoying the little things, such as mentally singing to the uplifting tunes of his Alt-z band. Despite not being the singer, still he has a blast singing along to bla bla bla song and some Bon Jovi and Scorpions.

Singing uplifts feelings when upset, down, de-motivated. Individuals may experience a lack of motivation, despite possessing the competence and ambition necessary to pursue objectives. Even those who are considered luminaries in their respective fields are not immune to such circumstances.

However, their motivation is sustained by their desire to explore the extent of their potential. Cultivating a singing mindset is crucial to gain back the positive feelings, emotions, desires, bla bla bla....





*DTF birthday treat....* For the first forty-one years of my life, I only ate when I was hungry. This was wrong. I soon learned at the Din Tai Fung restaurant that eating has little to do with hunger. Eating is a bonding experience among peers. Also savoring personal space with delicious menu especially dining alone during natal day. Happy birthday to me. 12<sup>th</sup> day of December.

## **Welcome Aboard! DTF New Staffs**

Hello, new staffs! Are you excited now to work at DTF restaurant at UAE, your new host country? Are you ready now to experience the unique hybrid (mixed up) culture? Are you eager to learn about all the different kinds of experiences among different nationalities and adjusting to the language system, adopt extreme climate, different mode of transportation, and even food diversity.

Are you excited to face any challenge that you can't wait to take on? If yes, then, remember that all those things mentioned above are uncomfortable at first. Just be optimistic, you can adapt it quickly, three to six months adjustment most likely. All expats have encountered these all. So, you're not alone. Remember, the hardest thing in the world is to set a new beginning. So just prepare yourself as you begin for this new adventure with DTF at UAE.

One important step for enjoying your experience is to take the time to learn about the unique customs and practices of your host country. It's also totally normal to experience culture shock, but don't worry, it's all part of the transition period! And the best part? You won't be shocked by a shocking culture, but because it has lots of exciting new discoveries and experiences. So, get ready to embrace this amazing journey. Welcome aboard!

(In the words of our basketball hero, Kobe Bryant, "The most important thing is to try and inspire people so that they can be great in whatever they want to do." Let us inspire our new colleagues to greatness by being a source of encouragement and positivity in their remarkable journey.)

## **Cooking A Form of Bonding**

*(In Memory of 'Shangrila' DTF Accommodation)*

Exciting news! It's Monggo and adobo cooking Friday at Shangrila-landmark Accommodation! As I enjoyed my regular off-day, I was feeling great and optimistic about the day ahead. At precisely 11:30 am, my clock went off, reminding me of the delicious dish Daryl Glenn would be cooking for me – my favorite monggo, green bean with pork. Daryl was always keen to help out in the kitchen, as he knew I was not the best of cooks - let's be honest, I'm terrible!

Sharp noon, I urged Daryl not to rush, as we had all the time in the world to savor the meal together. After all, it's Friday and a holiday, so we should take advantage of the relaxed state of mind. He enthusiastically replied and got everything ready for the cooking, I can't wait to taste it!

When Daryl and I finished our lunch, he tossed his clothes into the murmuring washing machine while jamming out to the upbeat tunes of The HU Wolf Motem, a cool Mongolian band.

Soon after, Nikko Eduardo and Justine joined us, and eating again with monggo dish, now all together. After that Justine, the rapper, even impressed us with his original rap song called 'Sumarap na, Sumarap na! (Taste so good!)' beat box tune.

Rodel 1V or Poport eventually arrived looking exhausted from making cakes all day at DTF AGC, so we decided to hang out on the balcony and sing karaoke until nighttime, of course with monggo the *\*pulutan*.

As the night came to a close, I hopped on Jojo's bed (he was on vacation in the Philippines), now a DTF Abu Dhabi store manager, and enjoyed my stay as a temporary staff member at the Shangrila accommodation for the weekend.

I couldn't help but wonder as I was getting ready to drift off to sleep - cooking is such an intriguing way to bond! It's the simplest pleasure in life that I've overlooked for so long. Who knew that a household chore like cooking could bring friends together to share a meal and create joyous memories?

*\* Pulutan is small dishes that you usually have with beer or other hard drinks. You can have anything from fancy garlic prawns to a simple mix of crackers, chippy or dingdong if out of budget for crispy pata, and canned tuna in oil. You got to have them during every drinking session because they're part of Filipino drinking culture. Unless prohibited by religious belief and with high blood maintenance and bad cholesterol medications, and to you like me, pulutan and beer match is a big NO!*

## **Positive Outlook With Ms. Sapana**

*(DTF MOE branch store manager)*

I had the pleasure of speaking with Ms. Sapana from Nepal, who has been working at Din Tai Fung for nearly eight years. When I asked if she was happy at DTF, she replied, 'Yes, of course.'

It's clear that Ms. Sapana enjoys working here and loves her job. She has learned a lot from dealing with customers and leading her team, which is why she feels fulfilled working at DTF.

As the young store manager, she motivates her team by staying positive and encouraging a positive mindset. When dealing with negative thinkers, she believes in inspiring them and understanding their unique perspective. Ms. Sapana takes an individualized approach to management and values each team member's contributions.

When Ms Sapana joined DTF, she had very limited knowledge about this field. But as she started working here, she got many opportunities to learn and grow. What she loves most about this company is the friendly environment and the strong bonds of friendship among colleagues.

Working with people from different cultures has broadened her perspective and helped her change herself for the better.

'Now, in my personal opinion, to bring about change, it's important to start with oneself first. Right? So, do you agree that personal transformation is the key to achieving a positive change?' I asked her.

"Yes". Said Ms Sapana.

'Then how to change or improve your team member skills?' I followed up.

'Well, let me tell you a secret - understanding people is the key! It's important to delve into why they behave the way they do and how they respond in different situations. To truly comprehend people, you must take them for who they are, not what you assume them to be, but on what they really are.' She added.

'Manager, last one, when you encounter hard headed newcomer staffs and that's they really are, how do you go about helping them?' I asked.

'It's important to encourage them to embrace change and see the benefits of adapting to their new surroundings. Sometimes it can be a challenge, but I believe that with patience and guidance, you can motivate them to adjust to the training and welcome a positive mindset. Remember, it's normal for newcomers to struggle at first, but you can always encourage and support them along the way.' She ended.

## **Manager Eslam Elevated Me To New Heights**

When I transitioned from being a massage therapist to working in the restaurant due to the pandemic, I had the pleasure of working with then DTF Dubai Mall Manager Eslam who was a shining example of strength and resilience in the face of challenging circumstances.

Even though he didn't verbally teach me how to excel in my new role, I learned so much from him simply by observing his demeanor and actions.

Sir Eslam's leadership style demonstrated the importance of remaining composed under pressure and exhibiting self-control, which greatly benefitted our team during busy periods when resources were scarce.

He led by example, pushing the full trolley into the kitchen and replace it with an empty one without waiting to the assigned staff to do it. And he always finding a creative solutions to get plates when needed. His leadership and mastery of his craft were truly inspiring.

In that challenging times, I had found that the support of my team mates and manager Eslam had helped me to grow stronger and more adaptable. I had been able to tap into my potential, even amidst a pandemic, and I was grateful for the Good Friend job that allowed me to grow to which I had learned to embrace new challenges, and this had led me to new heights in being calm under pressure like of my manager Eslam.

Along the way, I had discovered the joy that comes from loving what I do, and this had made all the difference. Resilience is key in life, encouraging us to see hardships as adventures to be taken on with strength and perseverance.

As a leader, like Sir Eslam, it's crucial to have emotional intelligence, which involves empathizing and understanding the emotions that drive your team. Effective leadership is not just about telling your team what to do; it's also about demonstrating how to handle pressure with calmness. By doing this, your team will be inspired and motivated to follow your lead.

*"Thank you for changing my life perspective more than anyone will ever know."*



## **Bartender Student To DTF Bluewaters Island Jumeirah Beach**

When DTF Jofel asked for my advice on studying the extensive bartending curriculum to prepare for his relocation to soon-to-be-opened DTF Bluewaters Island, I asserted that it is crucial for him to thoroughly go through his lessons with unwavering determination.

Procrastination, the action of delaying or postponing something, must be avoided at all costs, and devoting enough time, patience, and discipline to reading and understanding the material is of utmost importance.

When faced with the decision of whether to give up or keep pushing towards your goal, it's important to weigh the potential consequences of both options. In order to become a skilled bartender at the new DTF bar and master foreign drinks, it will take dedication and hard work.

This means spending countless nights studying (while your room mates are partying, karaoke singing), and you is learning about products and figuring out how to best serve customers with these classy beverages. It may not be easy sacrificing your day off, but there are no shortcuts. By putting in the time and effort to acquire new knowledge, you can achieve your goals.

Again, by making reading a habit, Jofel can enhance his cognitive function and retain information the knowledge about bartending, for long-term memory.

Good luck Bai! Vodka please for the diligent gentleman.  
Hahahahaha!

*Additional thoughts.....*

Have you ever thought about how just having a bunch of college degrees doesn't guarantee you'll be successful in your job? Like, honestly, having skills like BARTENDING, WAITERING, is what really matters nowadays in order to keep up with competition in the job market. Think about it, getting vocational education and training is crucial if you want to learn the necessary skills to compete globally. The people who can adapt, innovate, and learn fast are the ones who are going places.

Switching to an education system that focuses on practical skills instead of “just getting degrees or diploma for wall decoration” would help everyone out - individuals, businesses, whole industries, and the economy.

It's important to prioritize skills, nowadays as far as I have learned that you can actually apply to the real world and that can open up opportunities and drive innovation.

But I would like to express my utmost admiration for those individuals with college degrees who are able to utilize their qualifications while working abroad. They truly deserve our highest praise, Kabayan. Unlike my own degree in Political Science, which has limited applicability outside of the Philippines, unless I were to become a consulate. Nevertheless, I proudly consider myself as an ambassador as well, an ambassador of DTF staffs' well-being.

## **Revisiting C-76 DTF Lady's Accommodation**

Every time I make my way back to the lovely C-block DTF "lady's" accommodation at Rigga, I feel a sense of excitement to take on the bold climb to reach my once beautiful home on the 7th floor - the breathtaking "ceiling" storey of the building.

This feeling is simply unparalleled to any other and always manages to bring me back to my cozy room 706. It is this conviction that fuels my writing. I am beyond certain that I belong here again, in my cherished DTF home.

While the abrupt shutdown of the elevator may have been upsetting at first, it has allowed me to use the staircase for some much-needed exercise and a chance to give rebirth to my thoughts on myriad experiences at Din Tai Fung - thoughts that I once struggled to articulate but now can't wait to write about!

I am thrilled to announce that I have decided to write another book, which will be my 6th, to gain a deeper understanding of the captivating world that DTF has created me as an author, despite varying opinions from others.

(The facility has been designated as 'Lady's Accommodations'. It was previously exclusively intended for female staff members of DTF, however it has now been merged with the male staff.)

## **Spark is the Key!**

Have you ever wondered why you feel easily tired even when you haven't exerted much effort at work? It's not necessarily because you've worked a lot, but perhaps it's because you haven't done something what makes you feel alive and energized. In short, you're not inspired.

It's great to know that having a spark when we start work is really important. This spark helps us feel energetic and inspired to do our best! Having this kind of excitement for work can really make a difference and help us avoid feeling drained after long hours on the job.

I have learned at DTF that if we approach challenges with an enthusiasm, it can be easier to handle mental and emotional struggles compared to physical stress. It's important to have a strong desire in our hearts to pursue our daily tasks, even when they get hectic.

We can view our work as a way of life rather than just a means of making a living, which can make it enjoyable. Remember, in work like love life, having a spark is key!

## Where Is The DTF Company Bus?

As I eagerly rushed down the stairs of my lady's Rigga accommodation, I couldn't help but feel excited to catch the 1:30pm staff bus timing to DTF Dubai mall. My heart raced as I arrived at the jumped off area with just one minute to spare. But as the minutes ticked by, my curiosity grew as to why I was the only one there.

I waited patiently, not wanting to miss my ride, but the minutes turned into tens of minutes. I began to wonder if the bus was ever going to come. Despite my attempts to contact someone for answers, no response came.

As I sat there, feeling bored and impatient, I realized the importance of being patient and content in the present moment.

Suddenly, a text from a colleague changed everything, "you're late, bus pick up was 1pm sharp, new Ramadan timing. Check your group chat."

Surprised and a little embarrassed, I learned a valuable lesson - waiting without verifying is futile. It's always better to know what we're waiting for before we waste our time.



## The Food Delivery Dilemma

It's funny how the universe works sometimes. As I was waiting for staff to come and attend to me for their much-needed massage break, I spotted several food delivery riders from Talabat, Deliveroo, Noon, Careem and Dubai bike riders. It's impressive how they were able to find comfort in the DTF Nakheel waiting area, and drinking free water.

As I sat with them, I couldn't help but ponder on the convenience of having access to these quick and efficient food delivery services. It makes me wonder if ordering food delivery is a way to encourage people to take a break from cooking, or even convince them to abandon making homemade meals or *baons* for office break altogether.

It's fascinating how easy it is to satisfy your cravings with just a few taps on an app, a few clicks on a website, or a simple phone call. One thing I'm curious about, though, is whether ordering food delivery inevitably leads people to become lazy?

Again, does ordering food delivery seems like a luxury? Or does it inspire people to work harder to have extra income to enjoy this convenient indulgence? Or does it simply make them lazy?

After all, it's not exactly the most budget-friendly option, right? And those who are lazy, who doesn't work no matter what, cannot afford to order high-priced meals online. Confusing right? *Gutom na ba!* So have a break. It's mealtime (at DTF staff dining table). Here, we don't need to dial for food online. Chow!

## **Work as One Body, As Relationship, As Legacy**

### *As one body....*

The human body is a wonderful example of complexity, where each system plays a vital role and collaborates to ensure the overall health of the body. Understanding the interaction between these systems can give us insight into how our daily habits, such as exercise and diet, impact more than just one system.

Similarly, in the DTF restaurant, every team member plays a critical role in ensuring efficient operations. From the chef to the kitchen helper, server to the food handler, cashier to the waiter, pantry to the kitchen crew, cleaner to the washer, store manager to the area leaders, and section supervisor to the staff members, each fragment is an essential part of the larger system and important for the restaurant's success. There is no concept of superiority here; everyone's role is equally important, and we all have to work together to ensure smooth operations.

### *As relationship.....*

Having a great job can be such an inspiring experience, and I always love seeing new and old colleagues filled with energy and enthusiasm. It's important to remember that having a job is like having a romantic relationship - there's a lot of electricity at the beginning, to others it works until the end. While that can be thrilling and exciting, it's also important to make sure you've found the right fit. When you have, it can make your entire career and even your whole life feel lit up.

Speaking from personal experience, I've been thrilled in both my career and new LDR love life, and it's always worth finding the right match!

*As legacy.....*

I am excited to think about the legacy I will leave behind when I retire from DTF massage work. I can't help but wonder what impact it will have on the next generation of future "DTF co-staffs".

These questions have been on my mind for years as I pursued my passion for body massage job and writing. I am driven by a deep desire to leave a legacy - a gift of goodness for those who come after me, inspiring them with positive actions today and for future wonderful memories. Though pursuing this goal is a noble and weighty responsibility, still the best one that I am eager to embrace.



## **Do What You Love. Love What You Do.**

I was just talking with some long-time DTF staff members, while massaging their aching back, who have long years of experience in the company. I straight up asked them why they are working here for such a long time. Is it because this place is awesome or because they have got no other options? Surprisingly, they all came back with a similar response - they generally love what they're doing.

Although they all love what they are doing, they have different driving forces that assist them in achieving their aims. (Here, I excluded the money factor. I wanted exclusively the philosophical aspects which are more vital in investing oneself, like the mantra "investing skill for a job can earn you a living, investing in personal growth can earn you much fame and fortune").

And here's what I have learned more:

Those who stayed longer are already boosted with self-esteem. They used to be connected with a global brand and a famous trademark; DTF.

They had shared with me the importance of being focused on your dream job based on your given skills. Don't worry about what other people think of you - whether they see you as crazy, a visionary, or a dreamer - just enjoy your job passion. And love what you do. Do what you love. That's very fulfilling!

## A Souvenir To Take Home

When I gave a message to DTF new staff Roel, I inquired him to what topic I should write in lesson 98 (I was drained already) of my upcoming book 'DTF 100 lessons I've learned beyond dining.' Roel confidently recommended that I write about DTF's souvenir items, to which I promptly took note of and began to compose.

I love hearing my countrymen, other nationalities and loved ones rave about their wonderful dining experiences at DTF, but sometimes words just aren't enough.

That's why many DTF diners choose to take home a souvenir or two, like a cute Bao Bao miniature, a DTF umbrella, mug, chopsticks, shrimp Bao Bao family mascot Plush Stuffed Toy, Bao Bao Plush stuffed toy baby soft squishy, and among other cute items. And they bring that little pieces with them! They've got fun souvenirs, they're sure to love.



These stuffs serve as a special way to remember their time spent sharing great food and company with loved ones. Buying a souvenir is also a simple way to say "thank you" to DTF for providing such wonderful moment, which is not a daily events of their lives. And it can make for a meaningful gift to share those experiences with someone special in your life.

Again, kindly take home any DTF mementos, every time you dine in here before leaving, as a meaningful keepsake of your cherished DTF connection.

## **Pursuit of Peace**

*(written at the quiet DTF Dubai Mall stock room, where only the ticking of the clock breaking the silence)*

When engaging in conversation with my colleagues regarding our kitchen duties with night shift dishwashers, I am often challenged to hear over the boisterous clattering of cutlery and dishwashing equipment or the giant machine. The cacophony of crashing water from the faucet and gurgling pipes adds to the already deafening atmosphere.

The tap-tap-tap of a knife delicately mincing fresh herbs, the rhythmic beating of a wooden spoon expertly mixing biryani powder for staff meal, and the distinct glurp-glurp-glurp of a pot boiling a creamy soup for quick refill.

The wonderful sizzle and bouncing of oil as it meets the moisture of food, and the spattering, sputtering noise that accompanies of frying a marinated chicken, all contribute to the symphony of sounds heard in a bustling kitchen.

Amongst the commotion, there are also serious simmering and bubbling sounds from random flaming stoves while heating up the high siding charcoaled wok pan.

Sometimes there is a continuous beeping of smoke detector and a chirp-chirp of empty-gas alarm *(at least there is no crackle of burning woods, and no leather shoes clattering on the tile floor)*.

These continuous ear splitting disruptions to me in the kitchen evokes me to pursue PEACE even at duty hour.

Similarly, new staff members at DTF, particularly those in their first, second, or third contract, often pursue material and financial success. However, upon achieving this material success and realizing that it can be more of a responsibility to sustain it in endless time than an emotional blessing, or that it does not bring them inner happiness or fulfillment, they too begin to seek out peace.

A peace that brings up true peace of mind, which all started from inner self, by shifting negative to positive mindset. A mind with job satisfaction of what we have.

Pursuing inner peace can allow one to letting go the bitterness of the past, to finding contentment in the present while working diligently amidst noises like at kitchen environment.

From this experience, I have learned that the presence of having peace of mind is tantamount of having the absence of stress.

*Thank you Dubai!*

**Xie Xie Din Tai Fung Restaurant!**

I must say, during my break at DTF Nakheel Mall branch, I couldn't help but feel a sense of gratitude towards this amazing city. It's truly remarkable to be a part of Dubai's vision and I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to work here.

Just imagine, without Dubai's vision, there's no man-made Palm island where I am exactly located working and writing this piece.

Without Dubai's vision, I wouldn't even have the chance to be connected at Din Tai Fung restaurant, situated inside several of the gigantic malls that have replaced the acres of dunes (desert lands) that once covered the UAE. Without its vision I might not be able to reach my dreams (*in writing many books including this DTF 100 lessons beyond dining*).

Thus, I'm so grateful to Dubai founding fathers' vision, for transforming the once barren (lifeless) desert into a bustling lively cosmopolitan city, with a diverse range of cultures, job opportunities, a hub for tourism, and with Emirates airlines connecting the East and West. And I have nothing to write more, except to say:

*Thank you Dubai, for your hospitality and diversity!*

***Xie Xie Din Tai Fung, for teaching me 100 lessons that I've learned!***

*(Finally, "Good Friend" walkie-talkie has been signing off).*



*A selfie taken in celebration, one day after the completion of my final draft of this book, to express my gratitude towards DTF Dubai Mall. It is within the confines of this establishment that I have spent the most meaningful of years which have substantially contributed towards the development of the 100 lessons that I have learned, extending far beyond the pleasures of dining at the esteemed DIN TAI FUNG restaurant.*

“Now I live for a moment when I can no longer put my awesome DTF experiences into words.”