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THE POWER OF A DREAM, A BITTERSWEET JOURNEY

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I dedicate this journey to those who are still struggling with their dreams. First and foremost, I would like to highlight that I am just an ordinary girl with a big dream. I did not come from a prestigious school nor a boarding school, I was all an average student, but being a doctor was my ambition since I was in standard one back in 2003. I have no specific or bombastic reason to become a doctor, but I must say that I am very passionate to reach my own dreams because in my eyes, they are possible to achieve.

This was evidently true because I am not a straight A's scorer for the examination UPSR, PMR or SPM. All I can say is that I am just a bare minimum student but PMR was the first big exam giving me hope that I can score like other smart students. It was the first achievement that I got a lot of A's out of many big exams in my school eras, which I managed to secure 8A1B. Moving on to SPM back in 2013, I did not manage to get a good result to qualify myself in any foundation programme. I was very frustrated and lost all hope for my dream.

In May 2014, I decided to go for the Matriculation Programme as my second chance to shine. Alhamdulillah I was offered to further my studies in Pahang Matriculation College for a 1 year programme. Unfortunately, I did not enjoy my time there during matriculation as I was pressured by the surroundings and I hate learning physics. I was not confident with myself and the feeling of inferiority slowly developed in my body. My father was the one who suggested for me to consider Diploma in Microbiology as an alternative to pursue my dream, even though he was reluctant to allow me to quit matriculation. Yes, during that day I was still looking up on how to become a doctor. I had applied for a Diploma in Microbiology and I got accepted.

All the lecturers in UiTM Kuala Pilah were very approachable, kind and very passionate.

It was not easy for me to quit matriculation as my father needed some convincing that it was the best decision and he would not regret it, thus he told me to list down 10 reasons why I wanted to drop it all, which I did and he finally agreed.

In November 2014, my diploma journey began. My main aim was to obtain the highest pointer so that I can pursue my degree in medicine. I still remember those days when my father said to me that pursuing diploma is not as easy as you think. I was so excited and scared at the same time, knowing that I have to maintain my pointer high for 5 semesters.

Apart from that, of course I was aiming for the Vice Chancellor Award (ANC). I worked very hard during my diploma in addition that I enjoyed learning all about microorganisms. It was very interesting. I am so lucky that I have good friends that accompany me throughout the learning process. All the lecturers in UiTM Kuala Pilah were very approachable, kind and very passionate.

I vividly remember the joy of learning where I will make time to study what I learned during the day after class. The thing that remains strong in my memory about my diploma journey was to be able to write more than 3 laboratory reports in a week. Throughout all semesters, especially during study week,

I woke up early in the morning and ensure to make time to do past years questions and checked the answers with the lecturers. Alhamdulillah I was able to get dean's list for all semesters except for the semester 3. I was very sad to know that my semester 3 result was very close to 3.5, but I accept the fact that it was not meant to be mine. My dream to become a doctor during that time was a bit shaken. I moved on and have reflected back on the sole reason I took up this diploma thus I continue to study and tried my very best to compensate my result to match with the minimal requirement for a degree in medicine.

Apart from academic stuff, I have joined the Persatuan Pembangunan Insaniah (PPI) and Sekretariat Rakan Muda (SRM) to occupy my days and give life more colors to it. All I can say about my diploma journey was that I am very glad to have a very supportive family, good teamwork and good lecturers.



Figure 1: My diploma classmate
(Source: Author's own collection)



Figure 2: My pillar of strength
(Source: Author's own collection)

After finishing my diploma, I kept praying to become a doctor, until one day I surrendered to Allah to give what is best for me because the chance for me to get into the course was very low. In May 2017, it was the best day of my life as it was the day I got accepted to Faculty of Medicine. Tears of joy streamed down my face knowing that my prayers had been answered. I still remember those smiles from my parents as they too were very happy. My journey was from over as the challenges were just about to start.

Entering medical school was not easy, it was full of tears, worries and depressed moments. There were days that I felt like giving up. Seeing your close friends one by one quitting medical school was very depressing. I continue my medical journey and challenge myself to finish what I have started. I failed many times during medical school but I managed to bounce back from those failures. I still remember the day I had to repeat the whole first year because I was shocked by the amount of knowledge that I have to grab. Every single day I tried plenty of methods to learn those never ending knowledge. There were days that it worked and there were days that it did not. To make it short, Allah has sent me a bunch of beautiful people and companionships in my life to keep me sane and guide me in medical school.

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Alhamdulillah, with a consistent study routine, never ending prayers, supportive family, friends and lecturers I managed to finally end my degree in Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS). Even though it was a long rocky journey, I am glad that finally I have reached the destination. John Heywood's once said '*Rome was not built in a day*'. Everyone has their own definition of success. To me success is someone who does not give up in life despite every thorn that they go through. And I for once am glad that I do not give up.

To put an end to my story (at least for now), I would like to thank everyone that was involved in my journey, especially my beloved parents, family, lecturers and friends. Thank you for all those never ending prayers and support. Only Allah can repay all those kindnesses. I am currently waiting for my housemanship and I humbly request your prayers that my housemanship will be smooth sailing and my passion in

saving someone's life will never stop.

Please pray that I can be a good successful Muslim doctor one day.



Figure 3: The end of my degree in Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) (Source: Author's own collection)