

Massachusetts College of Art and Design

My Daily Frustration

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Generally speaking, superpowers are seldom referenced outside the realms of fiction, for example, superhero films or supernatural theatrics. However, many of us in our daily lives exhibit unspoken superpowers: some possess the ability to walk perfectly without ever taking their eyes off their smartphone while others can hold their urine for an extraordinary long amount of time. However, for me, a superpower that I find most remarkable is people's ability to remain patient and kind in the face of animosity. It is no doubt we live in a very hostile world and while you may say, "It's not so bad all the time", I implore you to maintain that thought the next time a fast food employee yells at you for having the audacity to ask if their precious ice cream machine is finally working after being out of service for the past three seasons. Or, when a college professor is passive aggressive towards you because you asked for clarification on a very content-laden assignment. Or, when your boss accuses you of being Satan's spawn for missing your quarterly goals. You get it, people are rude and the world is cruel. Thus, the notion that some can begin to even foster a tenderhearted demeanor in a venom-laced society escapes me. However, what I do know is that I am a spiteful and irritated person, and I am unashamed of that.

It was a Monday morning, my partner and I commuted to South Station in Boston for his job. Since we still had some time left before he had to punch the clock, we decided to drop into a nearby Dunkin' Donuts store. The line was long and the customers were uncaffeinated. Zombie moans and groans filled the establishment. "No worries at all", I thought to myself, "It will just be a moment". Eventually, we got up to the counter and I ordered a medium hot chocolate with whipped cream and my partner a bacon, egg, and cheese sandwich. What ensued was the cashier, doing their best impression of a cobra, hissing and cursing at us in their native tongue (which my partner understood). Eventually, I came to realize that the cashier was

probably exasperated by the high volume of customers and vastly intricate custom order requests (people are very meticulous with their coffee). Even with that in mind, I was annoyed and this interaction further solidifies my distrust and unwillingness to depend on others for support. My desire to be self-reliant aside, I often question why I should ask for help when people can easily be so hostile in return. I strongly dislike being indebted to others and the “Dunkin’ Donuts catastrophe of 2022” is just one of the many reasons why I grew to oppose calling for aid.

To give you some further background about myself, I am originally from Vietnam and moved to the United States to continue my education and, as of 2021, to attend the Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt). The decision to attend college overseas was greatly encouraged by a shining scholarship in my name, granted by the college. There I was, starry-eyed at the prospect of pursuing higher education in a new country; it was exhilarating! The first semester at MassArt was incredible—I made valuable connections, gained key knowledge, and learned new things about myself, all while having fun in the process. However, it was during the second semester that my situation went downhill quickly. I suppose the expression is true, that all good things must come to an end. As the school year went on, funds started drying up and the demand to acquire materials for courses grew rapidly. Not risking being penniless, I tried my best to apply for work to support myself. However, I soon realized that legally, I am not allowed to work off-campus as an F-1 student unless the job is related to my major field of study (at that point, I was not given the opportunity to declare my major yet). To say I was devastated would be an understatement. I felt betrayed. My only opportunity to support myself is opposed by my own status as a foreign student in the United States. It’s laughable really. But there was not even a little laughter left in me. Thus, regrettably, I had to contact my

mother for financial support and I resented myself for doing so. It went against my ethics and I was powerless in preventing it.

I am currently a sophomore at MassArt, and I am ashamed to announce that my mother is still funding my operations. Sadly, I am a living, walking embodiment of the “trust fund baby” stereotype—an individual who never has to work a day in their life and still is able to survive. A lot of people take pride in this badge of honor but not me, not I. I do not hide the fact that I am a mooch because I owe it to myself to at least own up to it. I find that unpleasant people (who are often referred to as a certain part of the human body’s lower half) are better than unpleasant people who are oblivious to their unpleasantness. At least own up to it, I say.

Essentially, at the moment and for the foreseeable future, I feel trapped and for someone who is mostly proactive in getting myself out of predicaments, I feel uncomfortable that I cannot do it this time. Ladies and gentlemen, I failed the Houdini act. As a result, my discomfort manifests itself into frustration which I often take out at my partner. I will paint you a picture: I come home from classes, my partner tries to spark up a conversation and I am too frustrated to form a coherent response. I have essentially become the person I vowed to destroy—the rude Dunkin’ Donuts cashier—and I am disgusted with myself. That feeling of disgust is a fantastic breeding ground for more hatred in my heart which I carry with me every single day.

If I were to be playing devil’s advocate with myself, I would ask something along the lines of, “If you don’t like it here, why don’t you go back to your country then?”. That’s a fair question, and one I often ponder. Indeed, why shouldn’t I just pack myself in a box, go to the nearest post office and ship myself back to Vietnam where I have more freedom and human rights for that matter? The answer is: I have found myself in the arms of my partner in the land of

the free and I care too much about him to up and leave. It irks me to no end when people describe their romance as something akin to William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* but truly, if I were to return to my home country, our relationship would be separated, not by long-time rival families, but by almost 9,000 miles of distance. The dilemma is obvious and in the words of The Clash in their famous 1981 hit, "Should I stay or should I go?" I deeply care about my partner and time and time again, I am certain that I want to spend my life with him. If you have ever seen the masterpiece that is Ridley Scott's 1981 film *Alien*, you would undoubtedly shiver at the memory of the "Facehugger" scene. It goes as follows: a crew member on the *Nostramo* commercial space ship by the name of Kane gets attacked by an alien lifeform that tightly wraps itself around his face, restricting his airways (I would imagine this is how certain people think wearing a mask during a pandemic would feel like). The point is, I am the crew member Kane and I am "face-hugged" by the potent love bug—mushy feelings run amok in me. Nevertheless, this decision, unfortunately, solidifies my hostage status in God's country. Furthermore, it builds up resentment, not towards my partner, but towards myself for not having a solution to my predicament. This, in turn, makes me an irritable bridge troll.

All in all, the purpose of this essay is not to discourage potential students from pursuing education in the U.S., nor to incite a riot against the long-standing operational system of this country. This essay is merely a retelling of my experiences in an attempt to find the root cause for my daily frustration. Relinquishing control and accepting fate as it unfolds in front of me can and should be a freeing experience. As such, I wholeheartedly believe I would be a happier person if I were to just allow destiny to wash over me as is. However, my identity is all I have and it would be gone in the wind if I were to sacrifice my moral code for comfortability. I stand by my dislike for asking for assistance, financial or not. As a result, I am the frustrated

Dunkin' Donuts cashier who lashes out at the populus in response to unfair restrictions. Woe is me.