What happens when you change homes a lot

INQIAD BIN ALI

Thanks to my dad's job in the military, my whole life has been an expedition, literally. He got posted to various places, and I had to travel with my family as well.

My dad's postings took me to places and not only did I master the skill of adaptability, I tried to ingrain myself into the culture I lived in as well. From my nanu bari in Mirpur 6, to the port city of Chattogram, I learned a lot about the subcultures, social connections, and ethnicities.

Psychologically, the influence of changing constantly was crucial. I have always been socially awkward, preferring to shy away from interactions and crowds. Going to new places, I used to be afraid in front of strangers. Fortunately, things improved with my mom's encouragement. Inspired by support and sincerity from the locals, I made some truly amazing friends in Chattogram.

As I started to make more and more friends, my social skills improved too. I found myself trying to interact with kids my age back then, trying to know them on a personal level whilst being empathetic during their time of needs.

It came along pretty well; all the kids, including me, had become a sub-society of our own within our neighbourhood.

Life was magical, until my dad was suddenly posted out of Chattogram, at a time when I was finally breaking the shackles of my social anxiety.

The constant uprooting has left a big mark on me, emotionally. Nostalgia became a staple in my life. Sometimes, I feel like an alien, living in my own bubble and craving for something which, deep down, I know is impossible to get back to. I now feel afraid for no reason at all, and that makes me even more isolated.

As a result of undercooked friendships and emotional bonding, my personality is an arrested development, capable of both the dazzling and the dumb at the same time.

Social anxiety has become a thorn in both my personal and professional lives. My friendships now are either really robotic, or so deep and emotional that these relationships end up sabotaging by themselves, causing even more pain to my already distressed mind.

Constant uprooting of homes has been tough, but it hasn't been all doom and gloom. In fact, I now feel thankful to an extent. Chattogram was a true eye-opener for me. I got to know various cultures, lifestyles, and traditions.

The lessons learned from frequently travelling around have enriched my knowledge. I would have loved to change many things, if I could, in the past. But that's what life is all about, facing the challenges to carve your niche, isn't it?

Inqiad is a long suffering Manchester United fan and a self-proclaimed Targaryen. Contact him at inqiadali007@gmail.com

Should we be glorifying "hustle culture"?

KOUSHIN UNBER

Seeing everyone's impressive results in O and A Levels earlier this week, I realised that fruits of hard labour were, in fact, a real thing. Although it's only customary to hustle before your exams, we often compromise our health to get the results we want.

Hustle culture started getting called in 2021, when more and more people started realising that maybe their "grind" wasn't directly proportional to the outcomes. The same applied to other typical "success indicators". With growing criticism of personalities such as Musk, Buffett, and Zuckerberg, people started to unveil the secret to things, like wealth and success. We found out that most of them were either born into wealth, accumulated it from shares, or determinedly fought taxes to retain wealth.

It's not that we were blind to this information, we were just used to a different narrative. The narrative that "merit begets money".

I grew up with the idea of a twisted version of how the world works, unaware of the loopholes in the system that catapults the fortunate into positions of power and wealth, whilst hindering the growth of the less privileged.

The asymmetry between effort and re-

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sults is hard to accept. When highlighted, it can act as an active deterrent to your work ethic. This is extremely prevalent in the context of academia, where students who burn the midnight candle end up getting marginally less marks than those who are naturally talented.

The difference may be negligible, but the unfairness of the natural order of things certainly isn't. People tend to overwork themselves, and often face burnout because there's always a deadline to catch, always a higher wall to climb. What we don't realise, howev-

er, is that we're chasing an unattainable standard.

As a result, there has been a recent influx of infographics, articles, and video essays circulating on the internet criticising "the grind". With remarks about how it leads to burnout and complications to your mental health, people are slowly unlearning their usual instinct to glorify hustle culture.

It's easy to get fatigued by the idea of the disproportionality of hard work and success, and it may even discourage you from the idea of working hard to get what you want. The unfairness acts as an active deterrent and a catalyst for demotivation. However, it's important to remember that raw talent and privilege can only act as a boost for your success, giving you a head start.

In competitive environments, no matter how level the playing field is, the hours you put will never go to waste. The key here is balance – making sure you are not romanticising burnout but also putting in effort to achieve the results you want.

Koushin Unber is afraid that she might be peaking at eighteen and it's all downhill from here. Send obscure film theories to her at koushinunber27@gmail.com