Reclaiming My Voice

A Journey of Courage and Growth

Deeya Hanna

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Chapter 1: My Story Begins

From the moment we enter this world, we are surrounded by care—our cries for attention, food, and warmth met almost immediately. But as we grow, we begin to understand that the adults who raised us—our parents—didn't always have all the answers. They navigated parenthood the best they could, often without a clear guide. Reflecting on my childhood now, I think about the day when I might start my own family. I hope to approach it with a more mindful plan, ensuring that my children will not only have material comforts but also the love and guidance they need.

As I grew up, I realized our parents couldn't provide us with everything. Perhaps they didn't know how, or maybe they believed they were giving us exactly what we needed when they weren't.

One of the most significant lessons I've learned as I matured is the importance of forgiving them, of understanding that they were trying their best in a world full of uncertainties. Forgiving and moving beyond the past became a key theme in my own personal growth.

One memory stands out vividly. I was seven years old, sitting on our old, worn sofa, proudly showing my sister the scrapes and bruises I had collected from my day of adventures. My legs were like a patchwork quilt of childhood memories—evidence of my tomboyish exploits. But underneath the joy of recounting my latest daring feats, I felt something more profound—a growing awareness that I didn't quite fit the mold that had been cast for me. That moment, seemingly insignificant at the time, was a glimpse of the path ahead.

As I look back now, I realize that healing the emotional wounds from childhood is a critical step toward achieving something greater in life. Imagine discovering that by letting go of old pains, you could unlock parts of yourself you never knew existed. What if freeing yourself from the burdens of the past allowed you to feel a deep sense of liberation? Over the years, I've come to understand that shedding the emotional weights we carry leads to a lighter, more fulfilling existence.

I used to lie awake at night, trying to make sense of the world I was growing up in. The expectations placed on me, the constant struggle to fit into societal molds, and the pressures of family all felt like shackles. But, as I grew older, I began to realize that these experiences were shaping me in ways I couldn't yet comprehend. They were giving me the tools to navigate the complexities of life as an adult.

With each passing day, I felt myself evolving, shedding the layers of self-doubt and fear that had once defined me. The path forward wasn't always clear, but I was learning to trust in myself and the journey I was on. It's not always easy to move forward when the road is uncertain, but the most profound growth often comes from stepping into the unknown.

As I reflect on these early years, I'm filled with a mix of emotions—gratitude for the love I received, understanding for the challenges we faced, and appreciation for the resilience these experiences instilled in me. These moments laid the foundation for the person I would become, even if I didn't realize it at the time.

Reflections and Growth:

1. Describe a family tradition or expectation that you've

struggled with. How have you navigated this challenge?

2. Write about a time when you felt like the "black sheep" in your family or community. What strengths did you discover in this role?

3. Reflect on the cultural influences that have shaped your identity. Which aspects do you accept, and which do you question?

4. Create a family tree, noting not just names but the qualities or lessons you've inherited from each person.

Chapter 2: Roots and Expectations

From the moment I arrived in this world, I was wrapped in a tapestry of expectations. My cries for food and comfort were promptly answered, but with each passing year, I came to understand that the adults who brought me into this world, my parents, didn't always have a clear plan. They had me, hoping to do their best, sometimes navigating parenthood without a roadmap.

Growing up in Singapore, I was immersed in a rich cultural blend. Our society, a melting pot of traditions, brought its own set of expectations. As a young Malay girl, I was expected to embody certain qualities – gentleness, obedience, and a quiet demeanor. But even as a child, I felt a disconnect between these expectations and my true nature.

My mother, a deeply emotional person, wanted me to be more feminine. I found myself forcing a softness, a submissiveness towards others that didn't come naturally. Perhaps she lacked the right parenting tools, or maybe she couldn't accept my naturally dominant, masculine side while I still yearned for femininity. This tension would become a recurring theme in my life.

I remember sitting on our worn sofa when I was seven, my legs a canvas of scrapes and bruises from countless adventures. As I proudly displayed my battle scars to my sister, I felt a twinge of something deeper—a growing awareness that I didn't quite fit the mold that had been cast for me. This was more than just a reflection of childhood rebellion—it was the start of a lifelong journey of self-discovery, challenging the expectations that others had for me.

As a child, I harbored a secret wish that seems almost unthinkable now – I wanted to be adopted. The desire stemmed not from a lack of love for my family, but from a deep-seated belief that I could thrive if given the right environment. I imagined being an only child, showered with attention, provided with a proper space to study, and given all I needed to succeed. This fantasy was born from the hardships we faced as a family and my burning ambition to rise above our circumstances.

"If only someone could take me in," I'd think to myself, eyeing the more affluent families in our neighborhood. "I could show them what I'm truly capable of."

Money was always a contentious issue in our household. I vividly remember having to beg my parents for school fees, a humiliating experience that left deep scars on my young psyche. Now, with the wisdom of adulthood, I understand the limitations of their beliefs about money and success. I've come to respect that this was simply their reality, shaped by their own experiences and cultural context.

Still, the memory of those struggles lingers. "Please, I need money for school," I'd plead, my heart pounding with anxiety. The shame of those moments fueled my determination to create a different future for myself.

As I grew older, I began to notice a paradox that both fascinated and frustrated me. Children from well-provided families, those who had their own rooms and access to the best education, often seemed discontent. They complained about their situations, seemingly blind to the privileges they enjoyed. I'd watch them, puzzled and a little envious. "How can they not see how lucky they are?" I'd wonder. This observation strengthened my resolve

to appreciate whatever opportunities came my way, no matter how small.

In my young mind, adopted children seemed especially fortunate. They were known to be orphans, and this knowledge seemed to inspire extra care and attention from their adoptive families and society at large. I romanticized this idea, imagining a life where my potential could be nurtured without the constraints I felt in my own family. "Maybe if I were adopted," I'd daydream, "I could have a fresh start, a chance to be truly seen and understood."

As I grew, I began to notice the unspoken rules that governed our household and our community. The expectation to never speak back to parents, to suppress one's voice – these cultural norms felt like invisible chains. Little did I know then how these expectations would shape my progress and my struggles in the years to come.

As I've grown and reflected on my childhood, I've come to understand the importance of accepting our differences without trying to change each other. My parents, for all their flaws, had their own struggles and limitations. I've learned to forgive them for the emotional gaps in my upbringing, realizing that every parent, just like every child, is on their own journey.

Though I often felt like the 'black sheep,' the one who questioned and resisted the norm, I now see it as a gift. It was this questioning spirit that fueled my desire to break free from the boundaries set by tradition and expectation. While at times it felt like a burden, it was also what drove me to forge my own path.

Looking back, I see how these early experiences planted the seeds of resilience within me. Each challenge, each moment of feeling out of place, was shaping me into the person I would become. Though I didn't see it at the time, my personal transformation had already begun, quietly taking root in the soil of my childhood.

One memory stands out vividly – a Hari Raya celebration where I was surrounded by my three brothers. Fairuz, the eldest, sat to my right, a pillar of stability in our family dynamic. Falah, the third brother, was beside me, his presence a reminder of the complex relationships within our sibling group. And Iqbal, the second brother, completed our family portrait. This image, frozen in time, encapsulates the intricate web of family ties, cultural expectations, and individual aspirations that shaped my early years.

These formative experiences, both challenging and nurturing, set the stage for the process of self-discovery and transformation that was to come. As I moved forward into the next chapter of my life,

I carried with me the lessons learned, the resilience gained, and an unwavering determination to carve out my own path in the world.

Reflections and Growth:

1. Describe a family tradition or expectation that you've struggled with. How have you navigated this challenge?

2. Write about a time when you felt like the "black sheep" in your family or community. What strengths did you discover in this role?

3. Reflect on the cultural influences that have shaped your identity. Which aspects do you accept, and which do you question?

4. Create a family tree, noting not just names but the qualities or lessons you've inherited from each person.

Chapter 3: The Search for Escape

As I stepped into the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA), I felt a surge of excitement and hope. The halls of NAFA promised not just an education, but a pathway to self-expression and, perhaps, liberation from the constraints I'd felt for so long. Here, among the vibrant energy of fellow artists and performers, I sensed the possibility of a new beginning.

Life at NAFA was a stark contrast to the struggles of my earlier years. The lecturers were friendly, creating a conducive environment for learning and creativity. One of my most memorable experiences was when NAFA booked a club for new students to bond with all batches. It was a night of fun and

connection, a taste of the camaraderie that would define my time there.

Yet, the competitive nature of NAFA wasn't destructive; instead, it pushed me to improve. I constantly compared my work to that of my peers, but this comparison fueled my desire to grow rather than diminish it. I knew the real test of our abilities would come outside the walls of NAFA, where we'd have to apply what we'd learned in the real world.

In the world of theater, I found freedom. On stage, I wasn't just Nadiyah the dutiful daughter or the black sheep of the family—I was an artist, a storyteller, and a force to be reckoned with. Every role allowed me to explore parts of myself that had long been silenced. This wasn't merely performance; it was a journey of self-discovery. Theater gave me the space to express emotions I had hidden, to embody characters that pushed me beyond the boundaries of what was expected of me.

A pivotal project during my time at NAFA was the 'Solo Flight' production. We were tasked with creating 60-minute solo performances, taking control of everything from scriptwriting to directing, costumes, and lighting. It was a test of our complete artistic vision and capabilities. The process was grueling, but as I

stood on stage, bringing my creation to life, I knew I had found my calling. This experience cemented my belief in the power of theater as a medium for personal expression and social commentary.

In my second year at NAFA, I realized that my ambition extended beyond just theater studies. The creative environment at NAFA nurtured not only my artistic skills but also my entrepreneurial spirit. I couldn't wait to graduate and explore the possibilities that lay beyond the academy's walls.

Unlike many of my peers, I didn't have a mentor guiding my early career. I navigated the complexities of the artistic world on my own, relying on sheer determination and self-motivation. In the absence of influential figures in my immediate circle, I turned to resources like YouTube for inspiration. Motivational videos became my guidance, helping me stay focused on my goals and fuel my ambition.

This self-reliant approach, while challenging, instilled in me a sense of independence and resilience that would serve me well in the years to come. It was during this time of growth and exploration that I made a decision that would alter the course of my life. I chose to defer my final year at NAFA to work and focus on building my WorldVentures business. Despite financial

struggles, I saw this as an opportunity to break free from the conventional path and create my own destiny.

As I navigated the challenges of building a business and finding my footing in the adult world, the idea of marriage began to take root in my mind. I saw it not only as a union of love but also as an escape from the limitations of my past. I imagined marriage as a partnership of minds and ambitions—a gateway to a new life on my own terms.

It was during this tumultuous period that I met my future husband. Our connection seemed promising—he was a lecturer with an online psychology clinic, and I saw potential for a dynamic partnership, combining my theatrical background with his psychological expertise. Boldly, I proposed to him, envisioning a future where we could build something extraordinary together.

Deciding to marry without my family's approval was my final act of rebellion against poverty and the constraints I had grown up with. I believed marriage would provide me with a fresh start and a chance to rebuild my life on my terms. But little did I know how complex and challenging this new chapter would be.

Looking back, I realize my determination to escape was both my greatest strength and a source of my naivety. I was so eager to leave

behind my childhood limitations that I was willing to take risks that had far-reaching consequences. I saw marriage not only as a romantic partnership but also as a way to escape, to create a life beyond the reach of the struggles I had known. However, this search for freedom, which began as a desire to break free, became a lesson in resilience and self-discovery.

As I reflect on this period of my life, I see how each step I took—though often made in haste—was necessary for my personal growth. Each challenge, each moment of doubt, was shaping me into the person I would become, teaching me that true freedom comes not from external circumstances but from within.

Reflections and Growth:

1. What does "escape" mean to you in your current life situation? Is it physical, emotional, or both?

2. Describe a time when you took a risk to change your life circumstances. What did you learn from this experience?

3. Reflect on a decision you made that others didn't understand or support. How did you find the courage to follow through?

4. Write a scene or monologue expressing your deepest desires for change and growth.

Chapter 4: The Illusion of Freedom

I had once believed that marriage would be my escape, the key to a life beyond the limitations I had known growing up. When I said "I do," I imagined a future where we would grow together, building a better life—free from the financial and emotional constraints of my past. But as the months passed, it became clear that the freedom I sought was merely an illusion. Instead of escaping, I had traded one set of constraints for another.

The reality of marriage was nothing like the partnership I had envisioned. The man I had thought would be my partner in life was emotionally distant and disconnected. The life we shared felt hollow, the connection that had once felt promising withered away into silence and unmet expectations. I had hoped that

together we would rise above the struggles, but in truth, we were sinking into a stagnant routine.

The weight of our financial struggles added pressure to an already fragile relationship. Despite my best efforts, we remained trapped in the same rented flat, the same cycle of unfulfilled dreams. I had married with the hope of improving our lives, but each day felt like a reminder of how far we had fallen short.

As the emotional and physical distance between us grew, I found myself feeling increasingly isolated. The partnership I had dreamed of became a distant memory. Instead of sharing a life, we were merely co-existing, two people bound by a decision that no longer held meaning. I had never imagined that a marriage could feel this lonely.

In my darkest moments, I realized that the very thing I had believed would free me had become another source of confinement. I had sought refuge in marriage, only to find that I was still shackled by the same limitations—only now they were wrapped in the guise of a relationship. The illusion of freedom that marriage had once promised was shattered.

Yet, through this pain, something unexpected happened. The adversity I faced revealed a strength within me that I hadn't fully

recognized before. As the illusions fell away, I began to understand the importance of setting boundaries and protecting my own desires. Though the realization was painful, it was also invaluable. It forced me to confront my deepest fears and recognize the resilience that had been dormant inside me.

I learned that freedom wasn't something external that could be granted through marriage or any other life decision. It was something that had to come from within. As I grappled with this truth, I began to reclaim parts of myself that I had lost along the way. Each moment of struggle became a lesson in resilience, teaching me that true freedom comes from embracing who I am, rather than trying to find it in others.

Through this journey, I grew to understand that my worth and happiness couldn't be tied to someone else's approval or affection. I had to carve out my own path, one that was defined by my choices, my values, and my strength. The freedom I had long sought was never going to be found in a relationship—it had to be cultivated from within.

Reflections and Growth:

1. Describe a time when you pursued something (a relationship, job, or dream) believing it would bring you freedom, only to discover it didn't. How did you navigate that realization?

2. Reflect on a moment when your expectations were shattered. What did that experience teach you about yourself and your inner strength?

3. What does freedom mean to you? Write about how your understanding of freedom has changed over time.

4. Think about a time when you felt emotionally isolated in a relationship. How did you reclaim your sense of self in that situation?

Chapter 5: The Awakening

The awakening came gradually, like a seed slowly pushing through the soil after a long winter. My love for theater, which had been dormant since my days at NAFA, began to stir once more. It started small—attending performances, feeling the familiar pull of the stage—but soon, the desire to be part of that world again grew stronger. I knew that stepping back into the theater was not just a return to an old passion; it was a reclamation of my true self.

Each character I portrayed on stage became a reflection of who I was at my core. With every role, I rediscovered parts of myself that I had lost along the way. Acting allowed me to speak truths I couldn't express in my everyday life. It wasn't just the thrill of the performance that drew me back—it was the freedom to

explore the depths of my personality, the ability to wear masks that revealed rather than concealed.

But with every performance came a growing awareness of the divide between my passion and the life I had chosen. The expectations of being a wife weighed heavily on me. The role I was expected to play at home was in direct conflict with the person I was on stage. I had entered marriage hoping to find freedom and partnership, but instead, I found myself confined by traditional roles that didn't align with who I truly was.

As my love for theater grew, so did the internal conflict. I was torn between the desire to pursue my artistic calling and the cultural expectations placed upon me. In our community, a married woman pursuing a career in the arts was often viewed with skepticism. The arts were seen as frivolous, something that a wife and mother had no place in. I questioned whether it was possible to honor both my cultural heritage and my personal aspirations, or if I would always have to choose between them.

The weight of these expectations became unbearable. I had sacrificed so much of my identity trying to fit into a mold that wasn't meant for me. Every rehearsal, every performance, was a reminder of how much I had lost. I had given up pieces of myself

to fulfill others' expectations, but the stage allowed me to reclaim them, one by one.

This realization was both painful and liberating. Painful because it forced me to confront the reality of my marriage and the life I had built, liberating because it gave me the strength to make a change. The theater, once a passion, had become a lifeline. It was no longer just a creative outlet; it was my salvation.

I knew I couldn't continue living a life that wasn't mine. The breaking point came when I realized that in trying to meet everyone else's expectations, I had lost sight of my own. It was time to take control of my narrative, to rewrite the story that had been written for me.

In the end, it wasn't about choosing between my culture and my dreams—it was about redefining what both could mean to me. I could honor my roots while still pursuing the life I wanted. I could be both an artist and a woman of tradition, on my terms.

This breaking point wasn't an end, but a beginning. A chance to rebuild, not from the expectations of others, but from the foundation of who I truly was.

Reflections and Growth

1. Think about a time when you felt like you were living someone else's expectations. How did you reclaim your identity?

2. Reflect on a passion or dream you had to put aside. How did it resurface in your life, and what did you learn from it?

3. Describe a moment when you had to choose between cultural expectations and personal desires. How did you navigate this challenge?

4. Write about a time when you reached a breaking point. What decisions did you make, and how did they shape your future?

Chapter 6: Rebuilding My Life

The realization crept in slowly, like dawn breaking after a long, dark night. The freedom I had sought through marriage was nothing more than an illusion. I had imagined that partnership would offer me a way out, a new beginning. Instead, it had become another layer of confinement. The life I had hoped to build seemed to crumble before me, leaving me to pick up the pieces.

At first, it felt like a devastating defeat. The dreams I had invested in this relationship had been shattered. But as the fog of disillusionment cleared, I began to see things differently. Though painful, this experience forced me to confront hard truths about myself and the choices I had made. Slowly, I started to rebuild—not just my life, but my sense of self.

Through the adversity, I uncovered a resilience and strength I hadn't realized was within me. I had spent so long living up to the expectations of others that I had neglected my own desires, my own voice. It was time to change that. I had been standing at a crossroads for far too long, paralyzed by the fear of choosing the wrong path. But now, I knew that I had to take control of my own narrative. No one else could do it for me.

I began the process of healing. It wasn't easy, nor was it quick, but it was necessary. Each step felt like a small victory. I gave myself permission to focus on my passions once again, to reconnect with the parts of myself that I had lost. Theater, which had always been a source of expression and freedom, became my lifeline. On stage, I rediscovered the voice I had silenced in my everyday life.

But it wasn't just about reclaiming my love for the arts. I had to rebuild other aspects of my life too—my sense of purpose, my identity beyond the roles of wife and partner. I had spent so long defining myself by my relationship that I had forgotten who I was outside of it. Now, I had the opportunity to redefine what freedom truly meant for me.

As I moved forward, I found strength in the support of the people around me. Friends, colleagues, and even strangers played a role

in helping me find my way. I realized that while independence was important, true freedom didn't mean doing everything on my own. It meant surrounding myself with people who believed in me, who encouraged me to be my authentic self.

I also learned to be kinder to myself, to forgive myself for the choices I had made in the past. I had done the best I could with the information and experiences I had at the time. Now, with new awareness, I could move forward without the weight of regret.

Looking back, I see that the breaking of my illusions wasn't the end of my journey, but the beginning. It marked the start of a new chapter in my life, one where I would no longer be confined by the expectations of others. I had been given a second chance—not to start over, but to rebuild from where I was, stronger and more self-assured.

Rebuilding my life wasn't just about putting the pieces back together; it was about creating something entirely new. I had the power to shape my own story, and for the first time, I wasn't afraid to do so.

Reflections and Growth

1. Reflect on a time when you had to rebuild your life after a setback. What strengths did you discover in the process?

2. Think about a moment when you realized that the path you were on wasn't what you had imagined. How did you redirect your course?

3. Write about a time when you redefined what freedom meant to you. What did you learn from that experience?

4. Describe a moment when you forgave yourself for past choices. How did that self-compassion help you move forward?

Chapter 7: New Beginnings

With the finalization of my divorce, I stood at the threshold of a new chapter in my life. The road ahead felt both terrifying and exhilarating, filled with daunting challenges and exciting possibilities. For the first time in a long while, I had the freedom to shape my future on my terms—but with that freedom came the weight of uncertainty. It was a strange mix of fear and hope, and I wasn't sure where the path would lead.

Returning home after the divorce was bittersweet. Familiar faces and places offered a sense of comfort, but stepping back into the family dynamic brought its own challenges. I was no longer the same person I had been when I first left, and my role within the family had changed as well. I had to rediscover my place within this familiar yet evolving environment. While it felt good to be back, I

also sensed a new layer of complexity in my relationships with my parents and siblings.

As I navigated this new phase, I realized that my spiritual practice had become more important than ever. It was a wellspring of comfort and strength, guiding me through moments of doubt and helping me find clarity amid the uncertainty. Through meditation and reflection, I began to make peace with the past and accept the present for what it was—an opportunity to rebuild, to rediscover who I was outside of the roles I had once played.

This process of rebuilding wasn't just about practical changes, like finding a new job or reestablishing myself in the community. It was an internal transformation as well. I began to understand that new beginnings are not always about starting from scratch—they're about integrating the lessons of the past into the future. Every mistake, every hardship, had shaped me into the person I was becoming. And while the road ahead was still unclear, I trusted that I had the strength and resilience to walk it.

Throughout this journey, I learned the importance of self-compassion. I had been so hard on myself for the decisions I made during my marriage, for not being able to live up to my own expectations. But now, I realized that those experiences were

necessary for my growth. I began to forgive myself, to see the value in the pain and the struggles. Each step forward was not a rejection of my past, but an acknowledgment that those experiences had brought me here, to this moment of new beginnings.

As I looked forward, I no longer saw the future as something to fear. Instead, I embraced the unknown with curiosity and a sense of adventure. There would be challenges, no doubt, but I had already faced so many obstacles and come through stronger. This time, I knew I could handle whatever life threw my way, and that was a powerful realization.

New beginnings, I discovered, are not about running away from the past but about carrying the wisdom of it into the future. The road ahead was still uncertain, but it was mine to walk—and I was ready.

Reflections and Growth

1. Reflect on a time when you embraced a new beginning, despite fear or uncertainty. What gave you the strength to move forward?

2. Write about how returning to a familiar place or dynamic after a significant change in your life affected your relationships. What did you learn from the experience?

3. Think about a spiritual or personal practice that has guided you through challenging times. How has it helped you find clarity or strength?

4. Describe a moment when you began to forgive yourself for past mistakes. How did that self-compassion shape your future decisions?

Chapter 8: Rediscovering Joy

In the midst of rebuilding my life, I rediscovered the power of art as a source of healing and joy. It wasn't just about returning to the stage—it was about using creativity to transform pain into something meaningful. Art had always been my refuge, but now it took on a new purpose. It became my way of expressing the complexities of my journey and the emotional depth I had uncovered along the way.

With each new project, I felt myself coming alive again. The art of creation had always brought me joy, but now, there was a new layer of fulfillment. I was no longer just performing for the sake of performance—I was using my work to connect with others, to share stories of resilience, and to help others find healing through creativity. The intersection of art and technology became

a powerful tool for reaching new audiences and expanding the ways we experience narrative.

At the same time, I was also learning the ins and outs of business. What had once been foreign to me was now an exciting landscape of possibilities. I embraced the challenges of entrepreneurship and collaboration, learning how to bring my creative vision to life while navigating the practicalities of the business world. It was a steep learning curve, but with each step, I felt more empowered to create the life I wanted.

Through these experiences, I rediscovered joy—not just in art, but in life. The more I leaned into my passions and embraced new opportunities, the more alive I felt. I realized that joy wasn't something that came from external circumstances. It came from within, from the act of doing what I loved and finding purpose in my work. Art had the power to heal, and through it, I found the strength to continue moving forward.

As I embraced this new chapter of my life, I began to see that the setbacks I had experienced weren't roadblocks—they were stepping stones. Each challenge had taught me something new, each failure had pushed me to grow, and every experience, good or bad, had shaped the person I was becoming.

Rediscovering joy wasn't just about finding happiness in the moment. It was about recognizing that life, in all its complexity, is a journey worth embracing. And as I moved forward, I carried with me the lessons I had learned, using them to create a future that was not only full of possibility but full of purpose.

Reflections and Growth

1. Think about a time when you rediscovered a passion or talent that had been dormant. How did it change your perspective on life?

2. Reflect on a moment when art or creativity helped you heal from a difficult experience. What did you learn about the power of expression?

3. Write about how you've used new skills or knowledge to expand your horizons. What challenges did you face, and how did they contribute to your growth?

4. Describe a moment when you realized that joy comes from within, not from external circumstances. How has this understanding shaped your approach to life?

Chapter 9: Lessons in Resilience

Stepping into the world of business was an adventure unlike any I had experienced before. What once felt foreign and intimidating gradually transformed into a landscape of exciting possibilities. Each new challenge was an opportunity to grow, expand my horizons, and test my limits. Business, much like theater, required creativity, resilience, and adaptability—skills I had honed over the years.

As I navigated the complexities of business and technology, there were moments of doubt—times when I questioned whether I was capable of mastering something so new and unfamiliar. But with every setback came an important lesson: resilience isn't about never facing obstacles; it's about how you rise after falling. Each

challenge became an opportunity to build my confidence, sharpen my skills, and push myself beyond what I thought was possible.

What I discovered was that resilience is like a muscle—it grows stronger the more you use it. The more I faced adversity, the more I realized that my greatest strength wasn't in avoiding failure but in learning from it. This was true not only in business but in every aspect of my life. The lessons I had learned from personal struggles, from heartache and setbacks, were now serving me well in this new phase of growth.

Through these experiences, I gained a deeper understanding of what it meant to be resilient. It wasn't just about pushing through difficult times; it was about adapting, evolving, and finding new ways to thrive. Every failure was a stepping stone, every challenge an opportunity to grow. I learned to embrace uncertainty, to take risks, and to trust that even in the face of failure, there was always something valuable to be gained.

As I moved forward, I realized that the skills I had developed as an artist—creativity, adaptability, and perseverance—were the very same qualities that would help me succeed in business. The intersection of art and entrepreneurship became my playground,

a place where I could blend passion with purpose, creativity with strategy.

Resilience, I discovered, is not a destination but a journey. It's the process of continuously learning, adapting, and growing. And while the path ahead remained uncertain, I felt more equipped than ever to face whatever challenges lay ahead. I had learned that setbacks didn't define me—my response to them did.

In the end, resilience wasn't just about bouncing back; it was about bouncing forward. Every experience, good or bad, had taught me something valuable, and I was ready to carry those lessons into the future, knowing that no matter what came next, I had the strength and resilience to navigate it.

Reflections and Growth

1. Reflect on a time when you faced a major challenge. How did you overcome it, and what did you learn about resilience in the process?

2. Think about a skill or area of knowledge that felt foreign or intimidating at first. How did learning it expand your horizons?

3. Write about a moment when you realized that failure was an important part of growth. How did this shift in perspective impact your future decisions?

4. Describe a time when you used creativity or adaptability to solve a problem. How did this approach lead to success or new opportunities?

Chapter 10: The Path Forward

As I've journeyed through life's many twists and turns, one thing has remained constant: my faith. It has been my anchor, providing strength in moments of weakness and guidance through every trial. No matter how uncertain or challenging the road has been, my belief in something greater than myself has kept me grounded. It's through faith that I've learned to trust the process, even when I can't see the end.

Alongside faith, gratitude has become a transformative practice in my life. Each morning, I take a moment to reflect on the blessings that surround me—the people, the opportunities, the simple joys. This daily practice of gratitude has shifted my perspective, allowing me to approach life with a positive mindset. It's easy to get caught up in what's lacking, but gratitude reminds me of all

that I have. It has helped me find peace in the present moment, regardless of the uncertainties that lie ahead.

One of the most powerful lessons I've learned is that the energy we put into the world comes back to us. I believe that the universe responds to our intentions, attracting people and opportunities that align with our values and aspirations. This understanding has changed the way I approach both my personal and professional life. Instead of forcing outcomes or trying to control every detail, I focus on becoming the best version of myself and trust that the right opportunities will come my way.

There's a beautiful synergy between faith, gratitude, and the law of attraction. Faith allows me to trust the process, even when I don't have all the answers. Gratitude keeps me focused on the abundance in my life, rather than what's missing. And the law of attraction reminds me that the energy I radiate shapes the experiences I attract. Together, these principles have formed the foundation of my personal growth and resilience.

But perhaps the most important lesson I've learned is that growth doesn't happen in isolation. We are shaped by the people we meet, the challenges we face, and the opportunities we seize. Every interaction, every setback, every triumph has played a role

in shaping the person I am today. And while the future remains uncertain, I feel more prepared than ever to face it with courage, compassion, and an open heart.

The path forward isn't about having all the answers—it's about embracing the journey, trusting that each step will lead you exactly where you need to go. It's about finding joy in the process, even when the destination is unclear. As I continue to move forward, I carry with me the lessons of faith, gratitude, and resilience. They are my compass, guiding me through life's ever-changing landscape.

And now, more than ever, I am ready to walk this path with confidence. Whatever challenges may arise, I know that I have the strength to overcome them. I trust in the process, in the power of faith and gratitude, and in the belief that the best is yet to come.

Reflections and Growth

1. Reflect on a time when faith or spirituality helped you through a difficult situation. How did it guide you, and what did you learn from the experience?

2. Write about a daily practice of gratitude or mindfulness.

How has this practice transformed your perspective on life?

3. Think about the concept of the law of attraction. How have you seen this principle manifest in your life?

4. Describe a moment when you realized that personal growth is shaped by both positive and negative experiences. How did this realization change the way you approach life's challenges?

Chapter 11: The Transformation

Names hold power—they shape our identity and influence how the world perceives us. As I stood at the crossroads of my personal and professional transformation, I felt a deep need for a change that reflected the person I was becoming. This is where the name Deeya Hanna entered my story, not just as a new moniker, but as a symbol of rebirth and growth.

The catalyst for this transformation came through my encounter with Dr. Fahmi Rais, the founder of the Grow Success Club. Dr. Rais saw in me a potential I was only beginning to recognize in myself. His guidance became a spark for deep self-reflection, encouraging me to embrace a transformation that started with adopting the name Deeya Hanna. Deeya, meaning "light" or

"lamp," symbolized my desire to illuminate not just my own path but also the paths of others. Hanna, meaning "grace" or "favor," reminded me of the blessings I had received and my responsibility to share them.

Adopting this new identity meant more than just changing my name—it required me to let go of old patterns and beliefs that no longer served me. This process was both liberating and challenging, as I had to confront aspects of myself I had long taken for granted. The name Deeya Hanna marked the beginning of an ongoing journey of self-discovery, where each day brought new challenges and opportunities for growth.

Alongside this external change came a profound spiritual awakening. I began reconnecting with my faith in new and meaningful ways. This wasn't about following rigid religious practices but about finding a deeper personal connection with the divine, one that could guide me through this transformation. As Deeya Hanna, I found balance between honoring my past as Nadiyah and embracing my new identity. It was a delicate dance, acknowledging where I had come from while stepping boldly into the person I was becoming.

Embracing this new identity wasn't without its challenges. There were moments of doubt when I questioned whether I was being authentic or simply trying to escape my past. Growth, I realized, wasn't about erasing who I was—it was about evolving into who I was meant to be. These doubts were natural, but I learned to navigate them with compassion for myself, understanding that true transformation is never easy.

My personal evolution affected my relationships as well. Some people in my life struggled to understand or accept this change. Navigating these waters required patience. I had to explain my experiences to those closest to me while also setting boundaries with those who resisted my growth. This was a difficult but necessary part of embracing my new identity.

As Deeya Hanna, I approached my work with renewed energy and purpose. This new identity infused my professional endeavors with a fresh perspective, allowing me to reimagine my goals and the impact I wanted to make in the world. One of the most significant shifts was learning to embrace vulnerability. I allowed myself to be more open, more authentic, and more willing to share both the triumphs and struggles of my journey.

This transformation was not a single event but the beginning of a lifelong process of growth. Each day as Deeya Hanna brought new insights and opportunities for reflection. I welcomed this constant evolution, understanding that transformation is not a destination but a continuous process.

One pivotal moment came when I received a certificate as a contributing author for a book launch by The Grow Success Club. Holding that certificate in my hands, I felt a surge of pride but also a twinge of uncertainty. Who was this person receiving the accolade—Nadiyah or Deeya Hanna? It was in moments like these that I reminded myself I was both. My past and my present were not separate, but a continuum of growth and change.

My transformation took an unexpected turn when I embarked on a hypnosis course. This experience deepened my self-understanding and brought new clarity to my relationships and aspirations. The course was incredibly transformative, revealing new insights into my life's purpose. I often envisioned myself speaking before large crowds—a dream that filled me with gratitude and hope.

Yet, while I strived to maintain positivity in my personal relationships, I sometimes found mutual support lacking. When

I returned to Singapore to advance my theater projects, I encountered disinterest and cold responses, leaving me to question the value and reciprocity in some relationships. This disheartening experience only strengthened my resolve to focus on the connections that truly supported my growth.

The hypnosis course culminated in receiving a certificate from Fauziah, my hypnosis trainer from Petra. This achievement marked another milestone in my journey of personal growth and self-discovery. A recent dream about my hypnosis trainer prompted deep introspection about what truly lies in my heart. The answer was clear: Ambran. I woke from the dream feeling a strong conviction that we were meant to be together, though the thought of marriage brought both excitement and apprehension, particularly concerning financial matters.

Ambran is undoubtedly kind and romantic, qualities I deeply appreciate. However, financial expectations and traditional roles in relationships sometimes cloud my perception of romance and partnership dynamics.

Professionally, I'm grateful for the global collaborations that have come my way. These ventures are not just for entertainment but for making a meaningful impact.

However, past misunderstandings have occasionally clouded these experiences, leaving me feeling unfairly judged.

The name Deeya Hanna is more than just a new identity—it's a promise to myself and to the world. A promise to continue growing, to shine my light brightly, and to use my experiences to help others on their journeys of transformation. As I step into the next chapter of my life, I do so with courage, hope, and an unwavering commitment to becoming the best version of myself.

Reflections and Growth

1. Describe a significant transformation you've undergone in your life. How did it change your perception of yourself and the world?

2. Write a letter to someone who has played a crucial role in your personal growth, thanking them for their impact.

3. Reflect on a name or title you've been given or chosen for yourself. How does it reflect your identity or aspirations?

4. Create a before-and-after portrait (written or visual) that represents a major change in your life.

Chapter 12: Embracing Complexity

As I continued my journey of self-discovery and growth, I began to wrestle with issues that defied simple explanations. Sexuality, relationships, and identity—these topics were far more nuanced than I had once believed. I started to see the world in a spectrum of vibrant colors, understanding that issues like attraction and identity exist on a continuum, influenced by personal experiences, cultural context, and individual journeys of self-discovery.

A pivotal moment in this journey was attending a workshop with counselor Bryan Shen, which opened my eyes to the complexity of sexual identity formation. I learned how childhood experiences, trauma, and societal pressures could all play a role in shaping one's sexual orientation. This new understanding challenged many of

the assumptions I had grown up with, and I began to question the rigid categories society often imposes on sexuality and gender.

The more I learned, the more I realized how limiting these categories could be. My own experience of a marriage without physical intimacy prompted deep reflection on the nature of relationships. I pondered questions of compatibility, the different forms love can take, and how societal expectations shape our choices in partners.

As I delved deeper into these topics, I found the courage to voice my thoughts on subjects often considered taboo, such as intimacy, self-care, and LGBTQ+ experiences. Addressing these topics wasn't without its challenges. I had to navigate the delicate balance between respecting cultural sensitivities and advocating for open dialogue. This required tact, empathy, and a willingness to listen as much as to speak.

Through this process, I discovered my voice in broader societal discussions. My unique experiences allowed me to contribute meaningfully to conversations about sexuality, relationships, and cultural norms. I realized that these discussions were not just necessary, but crucial for creating a more understanding and inclusive society.

My spiritual journey played a significant role in how I approached these complex issues. Rather than limiting my understanding, my faith provided a framework for embracing diversity and practicing compassion. It gave me the strength to approach these discussions with an open heart, seeking connection rather than division.

As my understanding deepened, so did my passion for advocating for more comprehensive education on these topics. I believed that open, honest discussions about sexuality and relationships could lead to healthier individuals and communities. Creating and promoting safe spaces for these discussions became a priority for me. Whether through workshops, online platforms, or one-on-one conversations, I strived to create environments where people could explore these complex issues without fear of judgment.

One of the most important concepts I encountered during this time was intersectionality—the idea that different aspects of our identities intersect and influence our experiences. This perspective helped me appreciate the unique challenges faced by individuals navigating multiple layers of identity. Understanding intersectionality helped me challenge societal norms within my community, sparking conversations that were sometimes uncomfortable but always necessary.

By embracing these complex topics, I found that the journey of understanding is ongoing. There is always more to learn, more perspectives to consider. I have learned to be comfortable with uncertainty and to approach these topics with humility and an open mind. Sharing my journey and insights with others has become a way to empower them to explore these issues for themselves. I believe that by embracing complexity, we can create a more compassionate and inclusive society.

As I look to the future, I am excited by the possibilities that come with a more nuanced understanding of sexuality, relationships, and identity. I believe that continuing these important conversations will help create a world that celebrates the beautiful complexity of human experience.

In embracing this complexity, I've found a deeper sense of purpose and connection. It's not about having all the answers but being willing to ask the difficult questions and sit with the discomfort of not knowing. This approach has not only enriched my personal life but has also informed my work with Cathartic, allowing me to create more inclusive and empathetic spaces for healing and growth.

As I close this chapter, I am filled with a sense of wonder at the intricate tapestry of human experience. Each thread—whether cultural, sexual, spiritual, or personal—contributes to the rich fabric of our shared humanity. By embracing complexity, we open ourselves to a world of deeper understanding, greater empathy, and more authentic connections.

The journey of embracing complexity is not always easy, but it is infinitely rewarding. It challenges us to grow beyond our comfort zones, question our assumptions, and see the world through new eyes. As I continue on this path, I am excited to see how this evolving understanding will shape my work, my relationships, and my contribution to the world.

In the end, embracing complexity is about embracing life itself—in all its messy, beautiful, and contradictory glory. It's about recognizing that our differences are not divisions but opportunities for connection and growth. As we move forward into an increasingly interconnected world, I believe this ability to accept complexity will be crucial in creating a more just, compassionate, and vibrant global community.

And so, I step into the future with an open heart and an open mind, ready to continue learning, growing, and embracing the

beautiful complexity of life. The journey is far from over—in fact, it feels like it's just beginning. And I can't wait to see where it leads next.

Reflections and Growth

1. Write about a time when your understanding of a complex issue (like sexuality, relationships, or identity) evolved. What prompted this change?

2. Reflect on an instance where you challenged a societal norm or expectation. How did this experience shape you?

3. How do you navigate the balance between your cultural roots and your global identity? Write about the challenges and rewards of this process.

4. Create a dialogue between different aspects of your identity, exploring how they interact and sometimes conflict.

Chapter 13: The Ongoing Journey

As I pause to reflect on where I am today, I'm filled with a deep sense of gratitude, amazement, and anticipation. The journey from the shadows of my past as Nadiyah to the empowered Deeya Hanna has been nothing short of transformative. Yet, I'm acutely aware that this is not the end but merely a waypoint in an ongoing journey.

Today, I stand at the helm of Cathartic, watching it grow beyond my initial dreams. Our programs continue to touch lives, using the power of theater to heal and transform. My partnership with SCAVAI has opened new frontiers in digital storytelling and immersive experiences, and through FOWCAAS, I've had the privilege of contributing to global cultural exchange. While I'm

proud of these accomplishments, I know that there is still much more ahead.

One of my ongoing challenges is maintaining balance. Juggling entrepreneurship, artistic pursuits, advocacy, and personal growth requires constant attention and adjustment. I've learned that balance isn't a destination, but a daily practice of mindful choices and priorities. It's about giving myself the grace to adjust, knowing that each day presents new demands and opportunities for growth.

On a personal level, I continue to evolve. Each day brings new insights into myself, my relationships, and my place in the world. I've learned to embrace this constant state of becoming, understanding that true growth often comes from discomfort and challenges. The path ahead is never clear, but I've come to embrace the uncertainty, trusting in my ability to navigate whatever challenges arise. Every obstacle has the potential to be an opportunity for deeper understanding and transformation.

As I look to the future, I find myself dreaming bigger than ever. I envision Cathartic expanding its reach, potentially on an international scale. I dream of creating a global platform that combines art, technology, and healing in innovative ways.

Personally, I aspire to continue growing as a leader, mentor, and voice for positive change. There is so much more to achieve, but I approach these aspirations with a sense of openness, knowing that life may take unexpected turns.

One of the most profound lessons I've learned is the power of authenticity. By embracing my true self—complexities and all—I've found clarity and strength in both my personal life and professional endeavors. Authenticity has become the foundation of my relationships and my work, and it continues to guide me as I pursue new challenges and goals.

Another invaluable lesson has been the importance of community. While our journeys are individual, we thrive through connection and support. The mentors, colleagues, and friends who have challenged and uplifted me have been instrumental in my growth. I've learned that the strength of community lies not only in the support we give but in the inspiration we draw from one another. As I continue my journey, I'm committed to building and nurturing these relationships, knowing that we are stronger together.

My thirst for knowledge remains insatiable. Whether staying abreast of the latest developments in art therapy, exploring new

facets of technology, or diving deeper into personal development, I remain committed to lifelong learning. This hunger for growth fuels my passion for continuous self-improvement, both personally and professionally.

As I've grown, I've also become increasingly aware of my responsibility to pay it forward. Mentoring young artists and entrepreneurs, advocating for important issues, and using my platform to amplify marginalized voices have become integral parts of my mission. It's no longer enough to focus solely on my own journey—I feel called to help others navigate theirs as well.

Cultural identity continues to be a significant theme in my life. Having challenged norms and bridged different worlds, I'm dedicated to fostering dialogue and understanding across cultural divides. This commitment informs my work, allowing me to create inclusive and empathetic spaces where differences are not only acknowledged but celebrated.

My spiritual journey remains a cornerstone of my life. It provides a framework for understanding my experiences, guiding my decisions, and offering solace in challenging times. I continue to explore and deepen my spiritual practice, finding ways to integrate it into my daily life and work.

If I could distill the wisdom from my journey into a few key lessons, they would be:

1. Embrace your authentic self, even when it's uncomfortable.

2. View challenges as opportunities for growth.

3. Never stop learning and evolving.

4. Find your unique way to contribute to the world.

5. Build and nurture a supportive community.

6. Balance ambition with self-care and reflection.

Looking ahead, I am filled with hopes and dreams for both my personal journey and the broader landscape of the arts industry. I believe in the transformative power of art, not just as a form of expression but as a tool for improving lives and society. My hope is to see the arts more deeply integrated into education, healthcare, and community development, both in Singapore and globally. I envision a future where art is recognized for its immense potential to heal, inspire, and bring about positive change.

In Singapore, I dream of a thriving arts scene that showcases our unique cultural tapestry while pushing boundaries and exploring new forms of expression. I hope to see more support for emerging artists, more collaborations across disciplines, and a greater appreciation for the arts among the public.

As I pursue these dreams, there are a few key goals that stand out:

1. **Education**: Fulfilling my long-held dream of pursuing a degree, which will open new opportunities for personal and professional growth.

2. **Travel**: Embarking on journeys that expand my mind and perspective, gathering inspiration for my work.

3. **Family**: Starting a family of my own while balancing the demands of my professional and personal life.

With these aspirations in mind, I also remain flexible, knowing that life often unfolds in unexpected ways. The road ahead is filled with both excitement and uncertainty, but I approach the future with an open heart and a determined spirit, ready for whatever comes next.

As I stand at this point in my journey, I'm filled with gratitude for how far I've come and excitement for what lies ahead. The road from the shadows of my past to the stage of my present has been transformative, and I know that the journey of becoming is far from over.

To anyone reading this who may be struggling with their own journey, I offer a message of hope: Transformation is possible. Your struggles can become your strengths, and your wounds can become your wisdom. Trust in your journey, embrace your true identity, and never stop believing in the power of your own story.

As this chapter of my life draws to a close, I'm reminded that, in life as in theater, the end of one performance is just the beginning of another. The curtain may fall, but it always rises again. So, I step forward into the next act of my life with hope, courage, and excitement.

The stage is yours. The spotlight awaits. It's time to shine.

Reflections and Growth

1. Write about where you see yourself in 10 years. What steps can you take today to move toward that vision?

2. Reflect on the most important lesson you've learned in your journey so far. How can you apply this lesson to current obstacles?

3. Create a personal manifesto that outlines your values, goals, and the impact you want to make in the world.

4. Design a self-care routine that nurtures your physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being as you continue your journey of growth.

Chapter 14: Wisdom for the Journey: Advice for Aspiring Artists and Entrepreneurs

As I reflect on my journey from a young theater student to an entrepreneur and advocate for healing through art, I'm filled with a desire to share what I've learned. To those of you who are just beginning your journey as artists or entrepreneurs, I offer these insights and practical tips, drawn from my own experiences, struggles, and triumphs.

One of the most important lessons I've learned is the value of embracing your own unique journey. For aspiring artists, I cannot stress this enough: do not compare yourself with your classmates or friends. Comparison is the thief of joy and creativity. Instead, focus on being better by learning more about what sparks your

curiosity. Take up classes outside your main course—this broadens your perspective and can lead to unexpected inspiration. Read books that expand your knowledge of topics you're passionate about. Keep a journal of your ideas and inspirations, as a random thought today might evolve into your next big project.

In a world that's constantly changing, especially in art and business, cultivating a spirit of curiosity and committing to lifelong learning is key to staying relevant and innovative. Attend workshops and seminars in your field and related disciplines. Follow industry leaders and innovators on social media and engage with their content. Set aside time each week for learning something new—whether it's a skill, a concept, or industry news.

Another valuable piece of advice is to network with people who challenge you to grow. Be humble and receptive to learning from those who are ahead of you. Attend industry events, introduce yourself to people you admire, and don't be afraid to reach out to potential mentors or collaborators. Surround yourself with positive, supportive individuals who share your vision and are committed to growth.

Stepping out of your comfort zone is essential for personal and professional development. Growth is found outside your comfort

zone, so face your fears and embrace the challenges that push you forward. Set ambitious goals and create a plan to achieve them. Visualize your success and practice positive self-talk to maintain your confidence along the way.

Throughout my journey, I've encountered several pitfalls that I urge you to avoid. First, steer clear of negative influences—people who drain your energy, gossip, or fail to support you. Avoid those who never do anything themselves but always have something negative to say about others. Don't let toxic relationships, whether personal or professional, hold you back. It's crucial to prioritize your physical and mental health, especially when pursuing ambitious goals. Burnout is a real threat in both artistic and entrepreneurial fields, so take care of yourself along the way.

While resilience is crucial, never confuse it with tolerating mistreatment. There's a difference between being resilient and accepting unfair treatment. Lacking intimacy or respect in any relationship, whether personal or professional, is not something to endure. Always prioritize your self-respect and well-being.

Certain resources have been especially helpful to me, and I recommend them for anyone on a similar journey. Books like *The Courage to be Happy* offer valuable perspectives for overcoming

obstacles. Online learning platforms like Coursera, Udemy, and Skillshare can help you develop new skills or deepen existing ones. Meditation and mindfulness apps like Headspace or Calm can help you maintain mental clarity and manage stress. And professional networks like LinkedIn can be invaluable for making connections and staying updated on industry trends.

Remember, every artist and entrepreneur's path is unique. Trust in your journey, even when it takes unexpected turns. Stay true to your vision but remain open to growth and change. Your experiences, both positive and challenging, are shaping you into the artist and person you're meant to be.

As you embark on your journey, remember that success is not just about personal achievement but about the positive impact you have on others. Use your art, your business, and your voice to make a difference in the world. Be mindful of the consequences of your actions and decisions, especially in our interconnected global society.

Embrace diversity in all its forms. Recognize that each person, culture, and perspective contributes to the rich tapestry of our world. As you grow in your field, strive to be a bridge-builder—someone who connects different worlds and

fosters understanding. Don't be afraid to challenge the status quo. Innovation often comes from questioning the way things have always been done. But do so with respect and empathy, understanding that change can be difficult for many.

Remember that your journey is not just about reaching a destination but about who you become along the way. Embrace the process of growth and transformation. Celebrate your progress, learn from your setbacks, and always keep moving forward.

Finally, never underestimate the power of kindness and gratitude. In the pursuit of your dreams, it's easy to become focused solely on your goals. But take time to appreciate those who support you, to help others on their journey, and to give back to your community. Success is sweeter when it's shared.

As you step into your own spotlight, remember that your light has the power to illuminate the path for others. Use it wisely, use it generously, and watch as it grows brighter with each passing day. Your journey is just beginning, and it holds infinite possibilities. Embrace it with all your heart, face its trials with courage, and savor every moment of growth and discovery. The world is waiting for your unique contribution. It's time to shine!

Reflections and Growth

1. Write about a mentor or role model who has inspired you. What qualities do you admire, and how can you emulate them?

2. Reflect on a failure or setback you've experienced. How did you bounce back, and what did you learn from this experience?

3. Create a five-year plan for your personal and professional development. Include specific, actionable steps for each year.

4. Design a workshop or presentation on a skill or insight you've gained that you could share with others in your field.

Chapter 15: Conclusion - The Ongoing Journey of Self-Discovery

As I reflect on this chapter of my life, I realize that the path I've traveled has been transformative. What began as a journey of personal confusion, a young girl feeling out of place, has evolved into something far more profound. Through every twist and turn, I've discovered that the key to unlocking one's potential lies within, in believing in yourself even when the world seems to doubt you.

Here's the core truth that I've held onto, one that I now share with you: **Believe in yourself when no one else does, because when you do, the world will follow.** Be bold in your pursuits

and unwavering in your beliefs. The life you desire is waiting for you.

As I think back on my journey, several important lessons have become clear:

1. **Self-respect is non-negotiable.** Loving yourself allows you to distinguish between the right and wrong situations. If something feels off, don't hesitate to remove yourself from it.

2. **Live with integrity and respect the law.** No one is above it, and there's honor in abiding by principles that maintain order and fairness.

3. **Gratitude changes everything.** I am forever grateful for the opportunities given to me by our forebears and by our community. Acknowledge the contributions of those who came before us, and build upon their legacy with care.

4. **Embrace your human experience.** Life will challenge and humble you. In those moments, remember that we are imperfect beings on a journey, and it's okay to feel and grow through life's phases. It's okay to be vulnerable and

real.

Emotionally, I've reached a point where I no longer take things personally. I've learned to focus on the present and move forward with each new day, letting go of the things that used to weigh me down. Professionally, I am poised to step into new roles and responsibilities, even as I navigate uncertainties.

Balance has been one of the hardest lessons to learn, especially in juggling the demands of work, personal growth, and my relationships. But I've come to see balance as a practice, not a destination. It's about daily choices, aligning my actions with my values, and staying mindful of the energy I give and receive.

As I look ahead, my aspirations continue to grow. I dream of Cathartic becoming a global hub for art, healing, and cultural exchange. I envision contributing to a broader movement that uses creativity to foster well-being and understanding.

But personal aspirations remain just as important. One of the biggest goals I carry with me is to continue my **education**, a dream I've held onto for years. Higher learning will provide me with new insights and tools, not just for myself, but to expand the reach of my work.

Travel is another source of inspiration and growth. I plan to embark on new journeys—both literal and metaphorical. Exploring new places enriches my perspective, and these experiences will undoubtedly shape the next stages of my personal and professional life.

On a deeper level, my spiritual journey continues to provide a foundation for everything I do. It keeps me grounded, gives me purpose, and guides my decisions, particularly in difficult times.

If there are a few key pieces of wisdom I would pass along to anyone reading this, they would be:

- **Stay true to who you are.** Embrace every aspect of yourself, even the parts you don't fully understand yet.
- **Face your challenges head-on.** Every obstacle is an opportunity to grow.
- **Never stop learning.** Growth comes from curiosity, and there's always something new to discover.
- **Find your contribution to the world.** Whether through art, business, or relationships, we each have something to give.

- **Build and nurture your community.** Surround yourself with people who lift you up and who challenge you to be your best.

- **Take care of yourself.** You can't pour from an empty cup, so prioritize your well-being.

Looking to the future of the arts, I hope to see them integrated more deeply into education, healthcare, and everyday life. Art has the power to heal, inspire, and unite, and I believe in its ability to make a real difference in people's lives.

In Singapore, I envision a thriving arts scene that isn't just about performance but about pushing boundaries, encouraging creativity, and enriching lives. I hope for more collaborations, more support for emerging artists, and a growing appreciation for how art shapes who we are as a society.

As I prepare to enter the next chapter of my journey, I do so with open eyes and an open heart. I know that the road ahead will be filled with both triumphs and challenges, but I trust that each step will bring me closer to fulfilling my purpose.

For you, dear reader, I hope that my story has inspired you to embark on your own path of self-discovery. No matter where

you are in life, know that transformation is always possible. Your struggles can become your strengths, your fears can become your wisdom. Trust in yourself, in your journey, and in the power of your story.

And remember, **every ending is just the beginning of something new.** Keep going, keep believing, and know that the best is yet to come.

Reflections and Growth:

1. Write a letter to yourself to be opened in five years. What do you hope to have accomplished or experienced by then?

2. Reflect on the major themes of your life story so far. How would you like the next chapter to unfold?

3. Create a list of personal values that will guide your decisions and actions moving forward.

4. Design a symbolic representation (artwork, collage, or written description) of your ongoing quest for self-discovery.

About the Author

Deeya Hanna, formerly known as Nadiyah Farhanah, is a multifaceted artist, entrepreneur, and advocate for healing through art. She graduated from Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) with a Diploma in Theatre and has been an active presence in Singapore's theatre industry since then.

Deeya's first theatre debut, "Every Singaporean Daughter," was featured in the Straits Times in 2015. She has performed in commercial productions, non-profit projects, and has been involved with MediaCorp and Universal Studio Singapore as a supporting talent.

Driven by her passion for the transformative power of art, Deeya founded Cathartic, an innovative venture that uses theatre as a tool

for personal and community healing. Her work bridges traditional performance techniques with cutting-edge technology, exploring new frontiers in digital storytelling and immersive experiences.

As a partner with SCAVAI, Deeya is at the forefront of integrating technology into artistic expression and healing practices. Her collaboration with the Federation of World Cultural and Arts Society (FOWCAAS) has allowed her to contribute to global cultural exchange and artistic development.

Deeya's process of personal and professional growth has made her a vocal advocate for authenticity, resilience, and the power of embracing one's unique identity. She continues to inspire others through her work, writings, and public speaking engagements.

When not on stage or in the boardroom, Deeya enjoys exploring new forms of artistic expression, mentoring young artists, and contributing to discussions on cultural identity and personal growth.

For more information or to connect with Deeya:

- Email: deeya@deeyahanna.com