

Sic Parvis Magna- (Greatness from Small Beginnings)

Change is the only fundamental constant in life; think about it. We are constantly growing up, changing our priorities and our belief systems. Some may say, “What is the purpose of life?” No, really, what is it? This question is a conundrum since it is so inherently subjective. Many want a beautiful career, while others want to be as rich as Elon Musk. Well, I’ll be honest! I just wanted to make some beautiful memories with the community at Bayes for my final year of university.

The Covid-19 Pandemic made me friendless. Gone were the budding first-year friendships, and in came the lifeless 4x4 grids of Zoom screen. My reality was being a lazy, obese, and pampered child by my parents. It’s crazy to think how important social connections are. Humans are social animals but only the pandemic made us realise this when the loneliness and boredom affected us all to some extent. For me personally, I developed some deep-rooted insecurities like social anxiety, and confidence issues. Tired of this version of myself, a change is what I needed. London was the perfect storm for this weather.

If I were to write an autobiography of my 3rd year in London, it would aptly be titled “DO WHAT YOU CAN’T!” Because that idea encapsulates everything that I did with my time in London after lockdown. As Martin Rich once encouraged us in the first year, THRIVING! Anyways, let’s just go about it, shall we? “Alexa, play ‘Danza Kuduro’ and begin with a drumroll.”

Problem #1: You won’t find good friends

*beep**beep* “Crap, I am late for uni again.” Running to the B200 lecture room awakened old lost memories but grabbing a seat with no one to talk to was not what I remembered, so I did the first natural thing. I looked for all my classmates from Year 1. Slowly and steadily, I rekindled with them. I learnt about the diverse perceptions of different cultures. Food Palette? Rejuvenated! I tried new cuisines like Korean, Japanese, Chinese, and African. Striking a conversation was no longer challenging, and words just came out without much thought. Gone were the social anxiety symptoms.

Being forced into random groups helped me make new friends and gave me skills of collaboration, leadership, and negotiation. Modules like Design Thinking truly challenged me into new skills like sketching while bonding closer with my group mates through using Lego

toy sessions to illustrate new ideas. The Northampton and Bun-hill row campus became synonymous. Bumping into my lecturers and friends was now a recurring theme. It was clear that I was evolving, learning, and changing. Progress was now a reality. Yet, something was bothering me. I wanted to experience more about my university than just the people in my degree and expand my social circle.

Problem #2: The Idea of Seeking Discomfort

Bold words for a subject title? I think so too! But my quest to solve this itch led me to a Bayes event with Google. I went with a Romanian friend to hear Kirk Vallis from Google, and the wisdom he imparted was that “Seeking discomfort, is the only way to grow your life further”. That was what the Bayes community helped me achieve!

One thing to know about me is I love singing and playing the guitar. A stroke of luck is what I say happened next. A typical day of swiping through Instagram stories revealed an Open Mic at City Bar by the Music Society. I signed up only to cheekily walk into the bar with my guitar with significant second thoughts. I stick to a dark corner, small talk initiates, and I reveal nervous energy. I was told to not overthink and play as if “No One Cares.” The Music Society taught me the value of doing things for yourself and not others’ opinions. The by-products of my time included getting exposed to all kinds of music, from Ed Sheeran to Latin-American, Korean, and Spanish. I went on to do a lot of crazy things ahead, one of them being writing my FYP which included interviewing an alumna from Facebook. I joined a bunch of City Students and busked at St Pancras station piano’s and did a spontaneous trip to Dover, Kent with my classmates. I exposed myself to new European cultures by being the events manager for ESN society (different ways to cheers and thought processes). I developed myself professionally by attending networking events and the Bayes Toastmasters to improve public speaking skills through the table topics conversations. All I am trying to say is that every new connection I made challenged my earlier ways of thinking, subdued my insecurities, and enhanced my student life to unfathomable levels.

A word of advice to anyone reading; people don’t bite! The next time you are in that stuffy elevator or sitting next to someone you don’t really know, just say a “hey!” Promise it won’t hurt! The multicultural nature of London and Bayes really says it all, so get out there and make the relationships you want!