

Interdependence

On a chilly Saturday morning, the people in Nadia's neighbourhood woke up in a good mood to start the day. Each unit in that apartment complex was filled with various souls that developed a unique persona and lifestyle.

As Nadia walked down the stairs, she greeted the many familiar faces along the way. She saw the young children running around; they resembled the blood cells that flowed throughout the human body, and brought energy to the neighbourhood. Without their cheerful laughs and silly childhood games, the community would be a dull place to live in.

When Nadia reached the herb garden, she saw the middle-aged aunt and uncle from the Tan family who lived just above her unit. Like the lungs that breathed oxygen in a body, the couple breathed in goodness and ensured everyone was on track with their workloads. Their simple encouragement words were enough to bring inspiration to those who were feeling blue.

"You have final exams next week, right? Studying is good but, make sure to rest," the aunt caringly told the college student who occupied one of the rented units. The young man who had initially looked troubled broke into a smile.

To the side, there was a group of aunties who were murmuring about a Facebook post they read about a rumoured regulation change. It was obvious that they resembled the mouth of a human - chattering away about the latest news they heard whether online or through word-of-mouth.

"Aunties. Don't easily believe those random posts you find. Let me help you explain what they actually mean," the working adult, Jeevan entered the conversation. Despite being burdened by office workload, he was always ready to lend a hand to the older generation of the community. He helped digest complex yet important information and broke it down for them to easily understand. In a way, Jeevan was like the stomach of the community.

As the sun began shining brighter that morning, a group of young ladies came over to the garden. The four women were fresh graduates who had shared a unit since their early university days. Since they first moved in, they acted as the spine of the community - they fought for the community's basic rights during the town hall meeting which involved their neighbouring communities.

"Morning everyone! Just wanted to remind that we have the town hall next week and if you have any concerns, feel free to message me about it!" Siti, the representative of the unit, cheerfully called out.

"I wrote down a list of some general concerns. I'll email you the document later, okay?" Mr. Aziz replied with a wave. He was the community's official leader who ensured rational decisions were being made. The rather old man had a brain filled with wisdom and experience that continuously shaped a positive lifestyle for the residents.

Nadia felt grateful to be part of that harmonious community and proud that her mother was one of the most respected members as she was constantly giving back to others. She was the heart of the community despite the lack of resources their family had since Nadia's father passed away when she was still in primary school. Although her mother had become sickly as the days passed, she was the reason everyone got along.

That is until the almost routinely bickering occurred. That Saturday afternoon, the people who were smiling towards one another in the garden were arguing through chat messages. Mr. Aziz and Jeevan were jeering about a misplaced car in the parking lot while Mrs. Tan was complaining about the noise from Siti's unit.

The flames of their argument, though only through digital writing, were hard to extinguish as they began to bring up older problems and let the body burn in anger. It was as if the united community from before had quickly crumbled from the light tap of a hammer.

Night fell and the apartment complex grew silent as people retreated to their beds. Nadia let out a big yawn after tucking in her younger siblings. She was determined to complete her assignment that night when she heard a loud thud from her mother's bedroom.

"Mom?" She worriedly called out.

When there was a lack of response, Nadia rushed over and found her mother collapsed on the floor. In a panic, she hurriedly checked if her mother was conscious but, nothing changed. Nadia's hand trembled as she continued calling out for her mother. Not knowing what to do, she took out her phone that had cracks at the edges.

Her tears began to fall and her fingers shook as she typed out,

"Please help my mother."

Almost immediately, messages came pouring in and she heard the doorbell ring. Her neighbours who were in mismatched footwear and overly comfortable sleepwear had arrived with a look of concern. Nadia explained the situation with her quivering voice and rapid heartbeat. Mrs. Tan held her close and urged her to breathe carefully.

Each person of the community who gathered in that small unit began to take action. Mr. Aziz controlled the situation and called up the ambulance. When the paramedics wanted to give first-aid information to check the body's condition, Jeevan took over with his limited medical background.

The group of aunties had quickly spread the information to the rest of the residents who had yet to check their chat messages. That led to Siti who received the call and immediately arranged for financial help, knowing the situation of Nadia's family.

From the ambulance ride to the anxiety-filled waiting room, Nadia and her young siblings were accompanied by the generosity and care of the community members.

Although they were bickering just a few hours before, they knew how important tolerance was when cooperation was needed. Each person acted as a human body part that had its own function but, teamed up to keep the heart and everything else happy and well.

Unity in Nadia's community ensured happiness for all generations.
