



Invaluable lessons

They are our heroes, our cheerleaders, our mentors. They are our parents. They raised us to become the individuals that we are today. And what lessons did they impart?
SALEHA ALLEN ALI, DIAN PASQUINAL KAUR and MILAD HASSANDARVISH find out.

DENNIS LAU, VIOLINIST-SONGWRITER-PRODUCER

Having released a music video titled *My Mama Says* in conjunction with Mother's Day last year, Dennis Lau has certainly made no bones about the fact that he cherishes his mother's nurturing.

When asked about the one valuable lesson that he got from the good lady, he says without missing a beat, "Be your own boss' was what my mum said. And that was exactly what I became."

He explains, "This came after I found myself constantly compared to my cousins who did well academically when I was young. My father wanted me to become a doctor or a lawyer, I guess."

Seeing how contented his piano teacher mother Chuah Chai Eng was with the flexibility of her profession, he knew that was the direction he wanted to take. "Very simply, like her, I knew that if I want to earn more, all I needed to do was to put in more hours!"

Lau went full-fledged into the entertainment business and how. A child prodigy in his own right, he was the youngest in the country to complete his grade 8 in piano at age 11. With several diplomas in classical piano (the ATCL, A.M.U.S.A, Dip ABRSM and LGSM (hons)), he also mastered the violin.

In this area, he won accolades as Outstanding Performance for the world-class Trinity College of London, LTCL examinations and Outstanding Performance in Violin during his FTCL examinations, by the Trinity College of London.



Lau later set up Mosaic Music Entertainment & Mosaic Movie Productions to manage his music and film endeavours. Where the latter is concerned, this year he has two movies in the pipeline, a Bollywood film and an Australian/Malaysian film.

As for his music albums, he has got several namely *Diversify* (2009), *Diversify Limited Edition* (2010), *Don't You Worry Child* featuring Michael Leaner and *Gotcha Style* featuring Moots.

A familiar performer at private and public events, he was invited to perform in the palace of our King before Prince William and Kate Middleton, the Duchess of Cambridge, when the British royal couple was here in 2012.

This year, his status as a successful artiste was endorsed when he was named the Most Promising Performing Artiste and honoured with the 2014 BrandLaureate Award and McMillan Woods Award.

The little kid who used to thump on the ivory keys with his mum has not only come a long way, he is unstoppable...

JACKIE M, SYDNEY'S CELEBRATED MALAYSIAN CUISINE SPECIALIST

"To be honest, it wasn't something I consciously decided to apply to my life but I think the most valuable lesson I've picked up from my parents is, to borrow a phrase from *Dead Poets' Society*, 'seize the day'. The constant feedback I get from people is that I seem to always have 50 million things happening at the same time and it may be a character trait I picked up from my parents."



My dad passed away recently (my mum succumbed to cancer when I was 6), so there's been a lot of reflection and reminiscences within my family about his past. What's always astonished me growing up in our household was how much my parents managed to cram into their existence. My mum worked with my dad every day from when they first started out as hawkers; people in my hometown of Seremban still recall seeing my heavily pregnant mum pushing their food cart on the street and feeling a tinge of sympathy for this poor, hardworking couple with several mouths to feed.

"They eventually upgraded to permanent quarters running a canteen within The Odeon cinema but didn't stop there. In between the 365 days a year running the canteen, my dad also taught Tai Chi every morning and several evenings a week both in town and outstation as the lead instructor of a local Tai Chi school, drove his own school bus, drove his own *bas kilang* (factory bus that also doubled as a rental on weekends for groups on day trips to Port Dickson), and raised nine kids who mostly did well at school and stayed out of trouble."

"Despite their hectic schedule, my parents still found time to take us on regular excursions to Port Dickson and Kuala Lumpur, bring us along to breakfast post-Tai Chi class every morning. They would also have weekly date nights when they would sneak out and watch a movie in town without the kids. My dad was a big fan of detective shows and wrestling on TV so while there's no denying he worked very hard, he did manage to develop some interests outside of work."

"I think nowadays people are often too worried about over-commitment and too ready to make excuses for why they haven't taken action to achieve their dreams. If an impoverished couple with minimal education raising a large family in a small town in Malaysia could live such a full and diverse life taking all kinds of chances with new business ventures along the way, there's really no excuse for us in this day and age not to seize the day."



DR RUBAN NATHAN, CONSULTANT DERMATOLOGIST

"I strongly believe my values have been vertically transmitted from my parents. This habit of running around a little too much for the kids is NOT to be encouraged. Increasingly, family life becomes a form of boot camp for kids and I think we should withdraw from speech and drama, piano, tennis, money tree and kids yoga classes together with smart phones, iPads, sugar and mindless cartoons. Instead, take more family trips, timeouts for the parents and generally have more fun is what I'm hearing increasingly from my parents."

LIM AI SAN, ENTREPRENEUR

"One of the most valuable lessons I've learned from my parents – Datuk Sri Lim Huah Leong and Datin Sri Wendy Lim – is to help and give to those in need whenever possible. I grew up donating and collecting funds for charity purposes. I would sell clothes I've hardly or never worn to raise funds or give them away and will put money aside for organisations like Pink Unity. This is definitely one of those lessons I'm grateful for because being able to help those in need is a very satisfying and fulfilling emotion knowing there are still ways I can contribute to society."



ANNE SAMAT, CONTEMPORARY ARTIST/WEAVER

"My parents brought up 10 children in a tiny two-bedroom apartment. My father was a security guard and my mother a housewife. I studied sitting in the stairwell, because there was a light there that stayed on all night. My school grades were good enough that I could study any subject but my father told me to follow my HEART. Now my time appears to have come. I have received international recognition, my work is about to be exhibited at the Saatchi Gallery in London, and I am proud to represent Malaysia in this way. My father passed away before I became well-known, but I think he would have been proud of me. I am so grateful for the wonderful gift he gave me: 'FOLLOW YOUR HEART'."

