

Writing Portfolio
of
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The Significance of Nurturing Happiness

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The screenshot shows the Jakarta Globe website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links to Home, About Us, Comment Policy, and Privacy Policy. A search bar is located at the top right. Below the header, there is a sidebar with social sharing buttons for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Reddit. The main content area features a large image of a stage performance at TEDxUbud. The article title, "The Significance of Nurturing Happiness", is displayed prominently. Below the title, the author's name, Arissa Menur, and the publication date, June 11, 2013, are mentioned. The category is listed as "Blogs, Talk Back". Tags include "education". The text of the article discusses John Lennon's mother's advice about happiness and includes quotes from Lennon and his teacher, as well as the author's own reflections on goal-setting.

The Significance of Nurturing Happiness

By Arissa Menur on 9:37 pm June 11, 2013.
Category Blogs, Talk Back
Tags: education

TEDxUbud combined cultural performances with inspiring talks on the environment, human rights, education and more. (Photo courtesy of TEDxUbud)

I am certain that many of us are familiar with the incident that took place with John Lennon. During his childhood, Lennon's mother constantly advised him that happiness was the sole key to lead a desirable life. This was a piece of advice that little Lennon took into great consideration.

One day, at school, his teacher asked him regarding his goal in life. When he answered 'happy', as any honest and innocent child would do, he was told that he did not understand the assignment.

As I grew older, I began to ponder about what am I going to teach my kids regarding goal-setting. Lennon was taught that one is not supposed to target 'being happy' as a life goal and that a life goal was supposed to be something along the line of becoming 'a doctor' or 'an astronaut'.

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During my search, I happen to have attended the recent TEDxUbud event held in Ubud, Bali, last weekend. The TED talks have always been associated with witty and informative talks, conducted in a warm atmosphere. The issues discussed range from

cross-border, social issues such as human trafficking and global warming, to the seemingly trivial issue of teaching children how to be happy, which was the big idea that Erin Michelle Threlfall presented in her talk that day.

Threlfall is an elementary school teacher at an international school in Bali. As a teacher, her goal is to ensure that her students gain and achieve the best standards of education. While most teachers prefer taking extra lessons and handing out copies of dictates for students to take home, she decided to do it through conducting a unique project that explicitly taught children on the varied ways of developing happiness.

Inspired by the notion that happiness is a choice that must be nurtured, Threlfall began by making her students develop a 'gratitude journal'. This started as a Thanksgiving Day project where students commenced their day at school by penning down the things they feel grateful of, no matter how petty it may seem to be.

The project was then developed by introducing other series of other activities, such as the 'Do Something Awesome Everyday' initiative, that encouraged students to make time and foster ways to be happy. Through this, children were able to identify unique and creative ways to generate joy in themselves in order to make their life wonderful. She, then, combined these creative projects with the syllabus that needs to be covered in their school lessons which was proven to bring positive results.

The projects aided Threlfall to cite limitations in the current education system, one of them being the stress that even exists among the elementary students. They are constantly bombarded with the pressure to succeed and to get fantastic grades. This may not be an issue if students are able to enjoy and connect with what they have learned because this is the only way where real education happens. Education lies in the incorporation of knowledge with its application in our day-to-day life.

Parents should emphasize on the importance of seeking happiness in whatever a child does. This will play a vital role at helping children cope up with both stress and pressure in present times and in their future lives.

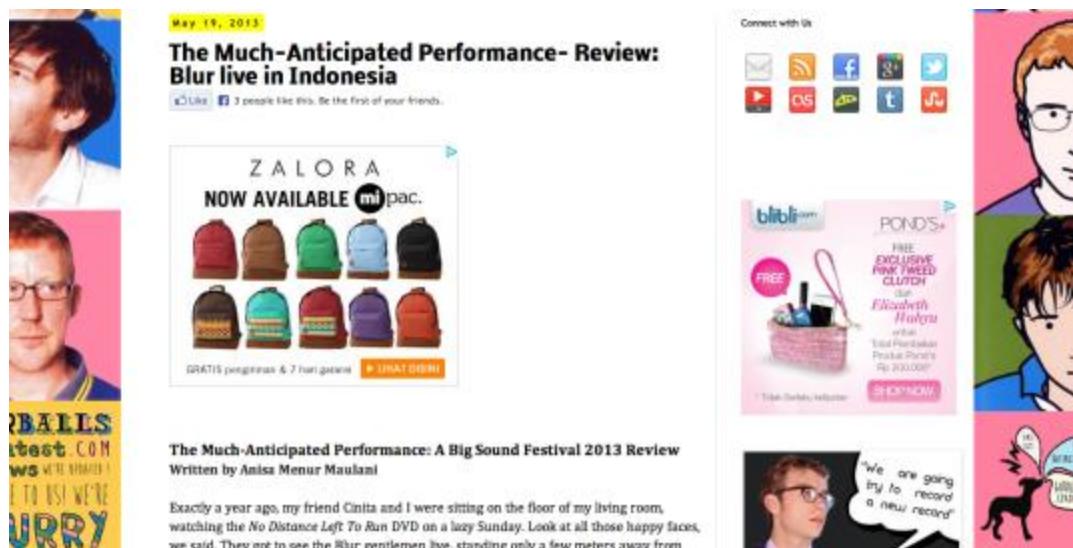
In a national context, we have seen how students in rural Indonesia are constantly being pressurized to excel in their national examinations, while students in urban areas are forced to prepare themselves for school/international examinations.

Without undermining the importance of hard work and ambition, I think it is important to teach children to be practically educated; that is, to comprehend, enjoy and to link what they are learning to practical life situations. This is a far better approach to learning than mere cramming up notes and studying late hours. Sometimes, education can generate happiness through eradicating ignorance.

Thus, I have decided that my future children and grandchildren will be only taught on the ways in which they can live happily yet be successful.

The Much-Anticipated Performance - Review: Blur Live in Indonesia

Published in **Blurballs.com** news section, 19 May 2013



Exactly a year ago, my friend Cinita and I were sitting on the floor of my living room, watching the *No Distance Left To Run* DVD on a lazy Sunday. Look at all those happy faces, we said. They got to see the Blur gentlemen live, standing only a few meters away from them. When are we going to have the chance to do that?

Funnily enough, the answer came in February 2013, when entertainment and MICE giant Dyandra Entertainment and music promoter Sound Rhythm announced that Blur will headline the Big Sound Festival 2013 on May 15th 2013 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Days seem to be fleeting, as we got closer to the night when our dream comes true. We have applied for a leave at work, and find ourselves unable to concentrate at anything. Then it finally happened. Twitter exploded with the news that the gentlemen had arrived, and there were photos swarming around of Damon smoking at the airport, Graham and Dave talking to their fans, and Alex doing a door-stop interview with the press.

May 15th finally arrived and we were finally queuing in line in front of Lapangan D Senayan, where the concert will be held. Noted that Blur was not the only one performing at the event; their show was preceded by Van-She, Tegan and Sara, and The Temper Trap.

I could not speak much of Van-She's performance, as I am not into their kind of music and thus was not interested in seeing them. But was Tegan and Sara and The Temper Trap were great; their songs were enjoyable, and the audiences seemed to be having a good time listening to them. These are the bands that are worthy of opening up an act as legendary as Blur, and the emotions that they built reached its peak just when the main show is about to begin.

My, how my hands shook and my stomach turned when they darkened the lights on stage and played *Theme For Retro*.

Then people began to scream “*They were on the right side of the stage!*”, and shadows moved onto the stage. Last thing we know, people were pushing themselves into front of the stage, and *Girls and Boys* was heard, closely followed by *Popscene*.

The atmosphere was crazy. Everyone was screaming; even guys in their twenties screamed like junior high school girls. We were dancing and jumping madly, and smartphones are all up in the air, because no one would want to miss anything.

The situation calmed down a bit with *Out of Time*, only to then explode again as Damon jumped down from the stage during *Country House*. He ran up along the fence, greeting the maddening fans. He ended up perched on one corner as audiences grabbed his hands, trying to get a touch of the charismatic frontman (Someone was lucky enough to have his/her hat being taken by him). He also managed to shower us with water whenever he got close to the audience.

The encore started with their new single *Under The Westway*, which was my personal favourite that night. The encore was filled with mid-tempo songs like *For Tomorrow* and *The Universal*, and some people felt that show was much too short. Adding one or two more songs perhaps will be appropriate.

There were also complaints on the sound system, as there is a moment when Graham seemed to be struggling with his guitar. At some point during *Parklife* I was not able to hear any sound of the guitar; but thankfully it was only a minor glitch that did not hamper the whole show.

The Blur gentlemen did not talk much. Damon greeted us a couple of times, but there were not many things that he said. However, I find that “*Tonight, you inspired me*” was the most touching thing he said during the night. It feels great if he was able to feel our excitement for having waited to see them for up to 20 years.

The show ended with the much-anticipated *Song 2*, which I believe was the soundtrack of everyone who lived through the 1990s. We jumped, we head-banged, we scream, we cried. The guys left the stage but we knew that we would keep this moment in our heart for as long as we lived.

It is wonderful to finally being given the chance to see Blur performing in your home country, and I congratulate Chile for being the latest addition in their tour!

L'arc~en~ciel Live in Jakarta - Concert Review

Published in personal blog, 22 May 2012

"Apakah kamu senang bertemu aku?"

He had the microphone with him, eyes staring at you in such a sultry way that you began to wonder if you just fell in love with a man who looks so much like a lady. A very beautiful lady indeed; porcelain skin and dark hair and wide-brimmed hat. And those eyes which had drowned you in its depth.

A throw of confettis, fireworks, bubble works, and an unbelievably accurate rainfall during *Anata*, you just can never took your eyes off him.

A blast of '*kisetsu gaaaaaa*' and the inner junior high schooler in you suddenly returned; jumpy, enthusiastic, thankful to be able to breath the fresh air again.

You were happy to see all of them; but you know that only one of them really matters. You smiled at the thought that he had never changed, still the same child-like innocence and excitement. Because nobody can ever stop Tezman.

You danced to *Stay Away* according to the choreography instructed on the screen because you just do not care about how you looked; you know that there may never be any second chance.

You believe that these lads actually make a good stand up comedian for their comedic timing and articulation; and my, despite still needing texts to guide them, their Bahasa Indonesia pronunciation is quite fine.

Bananas. You would go bananas for Tetsuya.

You giggle at Hyde for trying to play a traditional instrument —and got it wrong. They were not joking when they say the lads played *gamelan* and *suling* and *wayang* on stage. As expected of their standard, the animation at the opening of the event (and all the way through it) managed to make you drop your jaw.

Tetsuya bowed deeply at the end of the show. You replied with an even deeper bow. Because you are just grateful. To share time and space with the musician whose music had been accompanying you through adolescence; watching you like a caring older brother.

Who cares if you woke up feeling sick the next day. All that matter is that you had a magical moment; a train ride to the most robust time of your life.

Terima kasih. Selamat malam.

Change Desperately Needed in US Gun Laws

Published in Jakarta Globe Online's Talk Back, 18 December 2012

A young boy is comforted outside Sandy Hook Elementary School after a shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, on Dec. 14. A shooter opened fire at the elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut, on Friday, killing several people including children. (Reuters Photo/Michelle McLoughlin).

Still fresh in our memory when James Holmes killed 12 people and wounded 58 others when he opened fire in a midnight screening of the latest Batman movie in Aurora, Colorado, United States, in July.

Michael "Flea" Balzary, bassist of Red Hot Chili Peppers, then asked an intriguing question on Twitter: "Does this thing happen in other country?"

Unfortunately, such incidents happened quite too often. He, and hundreds of thousands others, believed that something needs to change.

The question lingered in the minds of many for days. And just last Friday, hearts were broken again when we found out that similar rampage had happened. This time a heavily armed gunman opened fire at a suburban elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut, United States.

Following a shooting at a mall in Portland, Oregon, which claimed the lives of three casualties just two days before, the gunman — later identified as Adam Lanza — broke into the school and killed 26 people, twenty of them were children from ages 5 to 10.

Debates sparked once again, and I found myself asking the same question: Is it really time for the United States to bring massive change in gun ownership regulation?

Obviously I am not the one asking such question. World leaders and people across the globe expressed shock and horror. Over the weekend, a lot of people went on the Internet and wrote endless rants on how the system had taken so many lives and something needs to be done about it.

One post reads, "The right to bear arms and to protect themselves is protected by the constitution. This is an inalienable rights!"

I grew tired of the argument, and wished that people would come up with better elaboration than simply "It is protected by the law."

Journalist Mark Follman had conducted a research in the past months on mass shooting and its relation to the United States' gun ownership law.

In an article entitled "[More Guns, More Mass Shootings — Coincidence?](#)", he explained his findings that in the last 30 years, not only that the number of guns available in the society is increasing, but also "in not a single case was the killings stopped by a civilian using gun."

The data is a huge slap in the face for those who believe that by making guns illegal, it will cut access for people to protect themselves with firearms.

After browsing through the data, I stopped reading for a while to try to imagine how to protect oneself with firearms in such situation.

Hypothetically, someone robbed me when I was withdrawing money at an ATM. When he pointed the gun to my face — since I had a gun of my own in my pocket — I was able to take it out and shoot him in the heart.

He dropped dead and my life was saved. That would be the case if I was lucky. But what if the robber had exceptional skills with guns and I was dead even before I remembered that I had a gun with me, or if I managed to shoot him but he survived?

We may end up shooting each other behind cars, just like in the movies. Imagine the casualties that would arise. Other people might just get killed. The situations would just worsen.

I grew even more convinced that despite being able to protect the rights of civilians to bear firearms, the National Rifle Association-backed regulation failed to protect innocent, unarmed people from protecting themselves from those with firearms.

The argument definitely needs to be extended; there is an urgency to protect those who were not fortunate enough to be able to protect themselves from guns.

On Saturday, once again Flea tweeted that people should not have the rights to bear arms. I was relieved to know that there is finally evidence that there has to be a better reason, and a better justification, for changes to happen in the United States.