

We have faced many challenges in our lives. They might have been physical, mental, or social trials. Despite everything we've been through, we've made it here today. When faced with the cruelty of reality and the uncertainties of this world, we pushed through every single challenge. We suffered and persevered through it all, but most importantly, we accomplished our goals.

As distance education students, we were far from our home campus. We did not have access to many of the campus resources, such as food banks, events, and in-person help. West O'ahu has done its best to accommodate us, although some things cannot be replicated online. Dealing with technology can be one of the biggest struggles of a distance education student.

Despite all that, we still stand here today because our roots are grounded. It might be in family, friends, workplace, communities, or religion. This helps us take on every problem that the storm of life throws at us. Our roots have a strong foundation to stand on. That's not all, though. Even with our roots firmly planted, there is still room for growth.

I often think about those Aunties and Uncles who always give out lychee and mango. It was always the sweetest, most juicy fruit you've ever tasted. As years go by, the tree stops producing. Uncle might hit it with a bat or tie chicken wire around its branches. No matter what he does, the tree no longer produces fruit. What does he do? He cuts it down. A tree that bears no fruit is useless. Now, it is time for you to go out and produce fruit. What was the point of all these classes and hardships if you do not go on to use them? Show the fruits of your labor. You might study further, you might join the workforce, or you might give back to friends, family, or the community. Whatever you choose, remember that the time you spent has allowed you to grow into the person you are today. With your roots firmly planted and having matured, what is next?