

# INDIVIDUALS TRANSFORMED COMMUNITIES

KEY HIGHLIGHTS 2018

I look forward to 2019 and beyond, where we will continue working together to bring even more young Singaporeans on their unique journey of self-discovery and inner transformation. Together, may we truly live to serve, to strive and not to yield.

> **Nicholas Conceicao** *Executive Director* Outward Bound Singapore

## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

In 2018, more than 15,000 students and working youths benefited from our local and overseas programmes. We doubled the intake of students for the MOE-OBS Challenge Programme to more than 60 schools, thus increasing the opportunities for our youths to share a common Outward Bound Singapore (OBS) experience and forge new friendships from different social backgrounds. We're encouraged that feedback from the parents and students has been very positive and more than 68.1% shared they would like to return for another OBS programme.

I am so proud to see many of our OBS alumni stepping up to volunteer in the community. Through our annual Project-Island-A-Hand events and ground-up initiatives such as Project Iridescence and Geocach'IN Ubin by our Leadership and Service Awardees, more than 700 of our OBS Alumni inspired and encouraged their friends to make a difference in their community. Their energy, enthusiasm and passion illustrates how our youth have the potential and willingness to create social impact beyond our programmes.

OBS expanded its collaboration with industry partners such as Republic Polytechnic, Singapore University of

Social Sciences, National Institute of Education and the Ministry of Education (MOE) to support student awards, training internships and technical proficiency certification for teachers, freelance facilitators and student volunteer leaders. In 2018, we also saw an increase in MOE teacher secondments to OBS in support of the National Outdoor Adventure Education Masterplan as well as increased recruitment for our instructors; many of whom were inspired to join us after their own OBS experience.

All this would not have been possible without the support of valuable partners like yourself. The milestones we reached in 2018 is testament to the close teamwork and partnerships we share with the industry.

I look forward to 2019 and beyond, where we will continue working together to bring even more young Singaporeans on their unique journey of self-discovery and inner transformation. Together, may we truly live to serve, to strive and not to yield.

Nicholas Conceicao

## A **LIFE-CHANGING** EXPERIENCE

## "

There is more in us than we know. If we can be made to see it, perhaps for the rest of our lives we will be unwilling to settle for less.

- Kurt Hahn, Founder of Outward Bound

#### "

Some lessons are best learnt from the great outdoors.

Since 1967, OBS has inspired more than 500,000 individuals, filled them with enough memories and lessons learnt, to reflect and act upon. The OBS experience is packed with adventure and learning moments one cannot find in a four-walled classroom, guiding individuals to discover and conquer obstacles both in the outdoors and within themselves.



#### **MISSION** Developing mentally and physically rugged youths to be active citizens inspired to serve



**VISION** Inspired individuals, transformed communities



**OBS MOTTO** To serve, to strive and not to yield

# CHARTING AND DEVELOPING YOUTH - REACH AND IMPACT

The future we face as Singaporeans will be challenging in an increasingly uncertain and volatile world. This is why OBS will play an even more significant role in preparing the next generation for such a future. Through conquering obstacles, our participants are led to discover hidden strengths, a clearer sense of purpose, and a new ability to dig deep within themselves and overcome whatever obstacles they may face in their lives. The bonds forged through the shared OBS experiences will also build social cohesion, bringing people together to face challenges, regardless of race, language, or religion.

Over the past year, OBS has seen over 15,000 participants accept this challenge and emerge with a greater willingness to serve, a clearer sense of purpose, and greater resilience. Nurtured with such qualities, they are empowered with the skills, knowledge, and social capital to strive for new heights, wherever life takes them.

## "'–

In the next 50 years, Singapore will be facing new challenges in an increasingly uncertain and volatile world. OBS will therefore play an even more significant role in preparing the next generation for such a future. The bonds forged through shared OBS experiences will build social cohesion, one of the cornerstones of Singapore's success. It will bring people together to face future challenges, regardless of race, language or religion.

– Ms Grace Fu, Minister of Culture, Community and Youth and Chairperson of National Youth Council

An excerpt from OBS' 50th Anniversary book

2018 AT A GLANCE

108 OBS programmes

conducted

15,291

Includes OBS total youth outreach ranging from schooling to working adults



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Schools impacted through the MOE-OBS Challenge Programme



**OBS partners impacted** 



### FEEDBACK ON OBS EXPERIENCE IN 2018





#### SECONDARY SCHOOL

68.1% of students liked the challenges of the outdoors and expressed interest to participate in future programmes



#### RITE OF PASSAGE

## MOE-OBS CHALLENGE **PROGRAMME**

Like a rite of passage, all Secondary 3 students will get the opportunity to undergo an OBS experience through the MOE-OBS Challenge Programme from 2021 onwards.

## 

In time to come, OBS will be a rite of passage and a shared experience for all young Singaporeans, regardless of race, religion, or background.

– PM Lee Hsien Loong

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The programme comprises a series of school-based Physical Education and Character and Citizenship Education lessons facilitated by teachers. Central to the experience is a five-day expeditionary course at OBS.

This is part of Prime Minister (PM) Lee Hsien Loong's challenge to OBS in 2007: to reach out to young Singaporeans with new and innovative programmes. Through the OBS experience, students learn to help one another, strive together, and not yield to obstacles — qualities that he considers definitive for the nation. PM Lee also noted that "Singapore will be strong only when our citizens are stout of heart, and united in purpose and action."

The rite of passage will eventually see all Secondary 3 students work together with peers from other schools to overcome various outdoor challenges. Using the landscapes all across Singapore as the "classroom" for learning and development, the programme incorporates innovative programming elements, such as novel team-based challenges and expeditions through the outdoor spaces via park connectors and waterways. This multifaceted pedagogical approach facilitates the students' appreciation of the environment and sharpens their attitude towards civic issues; building cohesion among themselves while developing ruggedness and resilience. Eventually, about 40,000 students will go through the MOE-OBS challenge every year.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES



Build friendships with people from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds to achieve team goals in an inclusive manner.

#### Be able to deal with challenges positively through self-directed learning and making right choices to influence their circumstances.

Commit to play an active role to improve the environment and community.

### LEARNING AND GROWING AS ONE

The MOE-OBS Challenge Programme will enhance social mixing and promote inclusivity, allowing youth of diverse backgrounds to interact together. Since 2017, we saw a mix of students from different schools, genders, and races coming together.



### SIGNIFICANT INCREASE ACROSS ALL FOUR LEARNING OUTCOMES, MEDIUM TO LARGE EFFECT SIZE OBSERVED



Out of a scale of 5

## PUSHING New Frontiers

We will continue to pursue innovation and push new frontiers to cater for the expansion of OBS and increase our student intake. With new mainland expedition routes, newly-acquired campuses (OBS East Coast Campus and Changi Campsite), and new learning modalities such as the kickbikes, trailwalkers, and mudskippers, we hope to broaden the perspectives of youth and encourage them to become confident, cohesive, and concerned citizens within their communities.

Partnerships are crucial to the success of the MOE-OBS Challenge Programme. We work closely with agencies such as the Public Utilities Board (PUB), Singapore's National Water Agency, and National Parks Board (NParks) to create programme and expedition journeys that not only maximise the usage of Singapore's blue and green belts, but also allow for a meaningful experience. The OBS experience is no longer limited to Pulau Ubin, but extends to the mainland of Singapore, tapping on the Park Connector Networks (PCNs) and Waterways around the Punggol and Pasir Ris areas. This enhances outdoor experiences for participants, and deepens their appreciation for nature on mainland Singapore.

### **Programme Innovation**

#### **Place-Based Learning (PBL)**

The PBL approach uses place and location to create meaningful and authentic learning opportunities for students. The topics can range from societal issues, heritage, environment, and more. The incorporation of PBL into OBS expeditions aims to cultivate a greater awareness of Singapore's history and culture, and promote a sense of rootedness for the nation.





#### MAINLAND SINGAPORE: OBS LEARNING QUEST

The OBS Learning Quest (LQ) seeks to heighten participants' awareness in heritage, cultural, environmental, and social-political issues through the unique landscapes of various expedition routes, in a purposeful and structured way. This teaches them to be active learners and keen observers, and is a crucial step towards becoming Concerned Citizens.

#### How Does It Work?

- Provides a fun and exciting multi-sensory challenge experience
- Participants set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals and work together to achieve them
- Conducted as a quiz, where participants earn points and complete the challenge by:
  - o Answering questions
  - o Solving puzzles
  - o Making observations
  - o Performing Road Block activities

#### More about the Road Block Activities

There are two Road Block activities: one at Lorong Halus wetlands and the other at the Pasir Ris Inclusive Park. Through various fun activities and sharing, participants can achieve the following objectives at the respective locations:

#### LORONG HALUS

- 1. Explore land issues and landfill in Singapore. Impart the importance of recycling and reducing landfill.
- Learn about the Singapore Water Story and how it relates to the Lorong Halus wetlands. Appreciate Singapore's unique geographical challenges and successes.

#### PASIR RIS INCLUSIVE PARK

- 1. Gain an inclusive mindset towards persons with disabilities.
- 2. Understand the importance of looking beyond the "disabilities" of special needs persons, and focus on their spectrum of abilities instead.



#### PULAU UBIN: OBS ADVENTURE HERITAGE TRAIL

Held at Pulau Ubin, this programme will nurture Concerned Citizens by inculcating an appreciation of the island's heritage and history.

#### NHB: Pulau Ubin Heritage and Culture

Together with the National Heritage Board (NHB), OBS developed content for the Pulau Ubin Heritage areas to inculcate a deeper appreciation and understanding of its history and culture. For example, the influence of Buddhism and its economic livelihood in the past. Through guided hikes led by professional OBS instructors, students were given opportunities to explore hidden shrines and relics of what formerly was the island's largest rubber plantation.

I have understood how important it is to preserve our heritage and environment like the heritage landmarks and wide biodiversity of animals and plants in Pulau Ubin. This has also aroused my interest in visiting Pulau Ubin with my family someday.

- Student from 2018's MOE-OBS Challenge Programme

## **Expedition Innovation**

OBS is also continuously exploring various methods to enhance expeditions, taking inspiration from expeditions across the globe to give students an enriched learning experience. 2018 saw new equipment being piloted in the MOE-OBS Challenge Programme, with the aim to increase students' exposure to nature, increase mobility for a longer-distanced expeditions, and enhance their experience.



#### TRAILWALKER

The Trailwalker is durable for different types of terrain over longer distances — it was designed to be used for multi-day hiking expeditions with heavier equipment and longer distances. The Trailwalker's design allows vertical compression loads on the hiker's back and reduces the strain on their shoulders. Hence, students can be more mobile, and journey further to learn more about themselves, others, and the world around them. It also provides students with back conditions (such as scoliosis) with an opportunity to experience OBS.

Currently, OBS is testing the Trailwalker with about 10% of the 700 students per week, and will continue to evaluate its effectiveness in providing an inclusive OBS experience for all participants.

#### **MUDSKIPPER**

Inspired by an arduous expedition to the South Pole by OBS staff, David Lim, the Mudskipper is an OBScustomised amphibious mode of expedition. On land, it can be attached to the hips and pulled on wheels. Two Mudskippers can be attached to each other to become a craft used for sea expeditions. The Mudskipper seeks to provide self-sufficiency for students as it can accommodate a heavy load of expedition supplies for long-distance expeditions.

The Mudskipper is still in its prototyping stage, and will be progressively introduced in 2019.





#### **KICKBIKE**

The Kickbike is a wheeled mode of expedition, enabling participants to travel more within a day to further camp sites, which would not be possible by foot. It does not require users to know how to cycle in order to use the equipment. Users can load all logistics onto the Kickbike itself, making it self-sufficient. This enables the students to have full ownership of their expedition logistics and sharpens their expedition packing skills.

The Kickbike is currently in phase three of the prototyping phase.

### **Partnership Innovation**

#### **Collaborating With Partners To Innovate Programmes**

We work consultatively with our key partners to provide new and exciting outdoor experiences. They include PUB, NParks, as well as the NHB.



#### PUB Reservoir: Water Activity @ Sengkang Reservoir Link

In 2018, the partnership with PUB and Waterways Watch Society allowed students on the Inflatable Rowboats to travel further along the water body. The expedition enabled them to have greater awareness and appreciation of the efforts taken to maintain the Singapore reservoirs, while learning to work as a team.



#### NParks: Expedition Rest Points & Green Spaces (Mainland)

At different points in the students' mainland expedition trails, expedition rest points in the various national parks serve as satellite campsites for the students. The journey between each campsite also serves as an additional avenue for instructors to conduct place-based learning.

## Ground-Up In

#### Ground Up Initative: Kampung Kampus

Ground-Up Initiative (GUI) is an organisation that envisions a 5G society (Gracious, Green, Giving, Grounded, and Grateful). Located at Kampung Kampus on mainland Singapore, students from the MOE-OBS Challenge Programme will get to experience farming in a rustic environment, away from the public eye. The farming activity adds a heritage and environmental education element, helping students to understand how rootedness (starting with ownership) and resilience can build a more mindful and environmentally conscious community.

### LESSON OBJECTIVES

- To provide students a real working, hands-on experiential opportunity to realise the meaning behind environmental sustainability and community building.
- To allow discussions and alternative opinions on how their future can develop, while taking the environmental and community aspects into consideration.



## INTERNAL CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

To keep up with the expansion of OBS programmes, training for instructors and staff is expected to be rigorous. OBS instructors are experienced professionals in the fields of outdoor adventure, training and development. They are professional full-time staff who have been carefully selected, and rigorously trained according to international standards to facilitate meaningful and impactful learning experiences for the participants.

It takes three years to train an OBS instructor to run basic and advanced courses like the 21-day programmes. They first undergo six months of training by OBS, and take externally recognised certification courses such as risk assessment and Wilderness Advanced First Aid to become a qualified instructor — but it does not end here.

OBS is constantly seeking ways to improve the instructors' vocational skill sets such as kayaking, facilitation, and environmental sustainability. This allows them to be updated with the latest outdoor education methods, skills, and equipment, and also prepares them to take on multiple roles — from outdoor educators to safety officers and mentors.

In 2018, some key programmes the OBS instructors underwent include the Sense of Place and an Ecoliteracy and Environment Education workshop by Creative Kids P/L.

#### Sense of Place

This in-house module trains and equips OBS instructors with a better understanding and betterment of skills. Through the training, they are given the chance to do some reflection and exploration of a particular place that holds a special memory to them. For instance, it could be a playground that they used to frequent as a child, giving the place meaning and sentimental value.

These learnings can be transferred to the way they teach students - to have a better appreciation of what they have in modern life, and what they can do on a personal level to make a difference around them.

## Ecoliteracy and Environment Education Workshop

The Ecoliteracy and Environment Education workshop, held in partnership with Creative Kids P/L, sought to increase the instructors' knowledge of Environmental Education, especially in the areas of Coney Island and Pulau Ubin.

#### **Training Available for OBS Instructors**

- Field Trip @ Coney Island
- Environment-based Activities (suited for Outdoor Adventure Education camps)
- Environment Education and Outdoor Education (linked with activities, Coney Island, and Pulau Ubin; through games and lectures)
- Conduct of Environment Education Activities

#### Impact on OBS Programmes

After completing the training, instructors will be able to conduct at least five Environmental Education activities for OBS programmes on Coney Island.





Uplifting the OAE industry is one of OBS' key thrusts, as we strive to future-proof our programmes. We invest heavily in our programmes' content and OAE talents, and leverage on our past expertise and experience to play a consultative role.

We work with key industry players; namely the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS); as well as with parents and participating schools, and the OAE industry as a whole.

## **MOE Teachers Secondment**

Under the MOE Teachers Secondment programme, MOE teachers can cross-deploy to OBS as instructors for three years, with the option of extending for another three years. This came about in February 2016, when the Steering Committee in the National Outdoor Adventure Education Masterplan suggested a more integrated instructional workforce.

#### **MOE Teachers Secondment to Date**



- Participated in the Instructor Selection Programme
- 3 Officers selected









• Expected to turn operational in July 2019, after undergoing the Basic Instructor Training





#### A FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE

Grace Tan Yan Yan, MOE Secondment Teacher, Batch of January 2018

Grace made a career swap after nine years, from a Physical Education (PE) and English teacher to an OBS instructor.

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#### What made you decide to be an OBS instructor?

▲ My very first job application, after graduating from the National University of Singapore (NUS), was with OBS but I wasn't selected eventually. I decided to explore other options that allowed me to work with youth and be active at the same time, which was to be an MOE teacher. I applied and got into MOE to teach Physical Education (PE) and English. After almost nine years of teaching in a secondary school, I wanted a change of environment and was hoping to widen my repertoire of skills as an educator. I read about the MOE-OBS secondment in November 2017 and decided to try for it again — after 10 years since my first application!

## • How is it different from being a teacher in a classroom?

Firstly, the environment in OBS is more dynamic. Every day on the job, it's an "expect the unexpected" situation.

Interaction with students is also more fast paced, given that I don't have at least a year to build rapport and journey with the kids, unlike in an MOE school.

## • What did you learn specifically in this MOE secondment programme?

▲ I learnt that whether I'm a classroom teacher or an OBS instructor, both vocations require one factor: heart of an educator. Be it planning lessons, curriculum or events; or thinking about what and how to facilitate the various programmes in a typical five-day MOE-OBS course, the one question that keeps coming back is: "How and what will the kids gain from being with me?"

There was one particular week when I had a very challenging girl.

She was clearly unmotivated to be in OBS. Throughout Day 1 of her five-days expedition, she refused to stick with her group and would wander off to find her other school mates. While she may listen to the instructions given, she required very close monitoring. Come Day Two, she was still the same. She would sit out of the height activity and claim to be unwell. After everything, I managed to have a chat with her to understand her issues and it was a very honest session. As I got to hear her, I got to understand her a little more. Deep inside, I knew I would be very glad should she leave the course, and I wouldn't have to deal with an additional "burden". But I knew that the challenge for her to stay was as much a challenge for myself; to keep engaging and encouraging her to look beyond herself and her circumstances.

#### • What hopes do you have for the future cohorts of teachers who will go through this secondment programme?

▲ I hope that we would never belittle their years of experience in schools as all of that was good training ground for our stint in OBS, and that we would never lose sight of the greater picture and purpose of us being an educator.



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## Graduate Diploma In Outdoor Education

With the increased focus on outdoor adventure learning as part of holistic education, and the implementation of the National Outdoor Adventure Education (OAE) Masterplan. OBS partnered with Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) with the objective of deepening the knowledge and expertise of OAE practitioners.

Through this partnership, we introduced the Graduate Diploma in Outdoor Education, which will enable practitioners to stay relevant amid the evolving outdoor education landscape. This was formalised in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 28 September 2018.







## A Closer Look at the SUSS Diploma

- First-ever locally developed and delivered postgraduate OAE programme in Singapore
- Provides a formal education pathway for OAE practitioners
- Existing OBS staff can tap on the Diploma to deepen their knowledge, reinforce field experience, and contribute back to OBS with more impact

## Outdoor Educators' Symposium

In 2018, we held our bi-annual Outdoor Educators' Symposium on 28 July. Themed Environmental Stewardship — Leading with Sustainability, the symposium urged leaders of the OE community to consider nature not just a means for adventure but also a medium for learning. The symposium aimed to increase awareness, generate discussion and inspire action on the practical possibilities of integrating environmental sustainability in their programmes.



It's an exposure for outdoor practitioners to see what environment education infused together seamlessly with outdoor education looks like. The outdoor is such a powerful place to learn and it is not just lessons for curriculum or knowledge, it is actually for life. So, we hope that we can actually interest and inspire outdoor practitioners to use this environment.

- Grace Lin, Director and Trainer, Creative Kids P/L

My key takeaway from this is the use of stories, narratives, and metaphors to teach sustainability and change for climate action. It actually allows students to be infused with their lessons in geography and science such that when they come over here (OBS), they feel the connectedness to the ground and environment. Then, they will find that they have a greater stake in the environment and taking care of it.

– Alex Ang, Subject Head/Student Leadership and Outdoor Education, MOE

I think the key takeaway is the networking that I get with other outdoor practitioners, whether they are teachers or staff from other companies. Also, getting a better understanding what the environmental education programmes are for the youth groups so that we can cater it into the programmes that we are running in LooLa.

– Tess Wong, Director of Programme Development, LooLa Adventure

**MOE-OBS** 

**Open House** 

Support from parents and teachers

is important for our young, as it helps them to adopt a positive

mindset even before the course

begins. In 2018, we conducted two

**MOE-OBS** Open Houses for parents

and teachers to give them a better understanding of the programme

and alleviate any potential concerns.

A total of 157 parents and 53 teachers underwent this in 2018.





I love every moment of it. It brings back a lot of memories and those were the days where I was here doing all the programmes myself and I wish that my son would benefit from it too.

 Alex Tan, parent of a Secondary 3 student who will be participating in an upcoming MOE-OBS Challenge Programme

Through the camp they exercise leadership, the students take turns to lead each other, and take initiatives to solve problems. Overall, OBS has become quite an internal part of our school.

 Khoo Tse Horng, Principal, St Hilda's Secondary School

#### OBS AND THE COMMUNITY

## SHAPING THE **NEXT GENERATION**

The impact of OBS goes beyond, and the experience is a lifelong journey.

With the OBS Alumni network, youth who wish to transform their communities can continue even after their course ends. This network serves as a platform to forge new friendships and deepen existing friendships with like-minded youth. Bound by the OBS experience, these like-minded youth exemplify the OBS motto of "To Serve, To Strive and Not to Yield" by organising and/or participating in meaningful alumni-initiated community projects that impact the environment and the community.

## "

Serving as a Leadership and Service Award (LSA) attendee really helped to raise my awareness of the presence and needs of special needs children, and better my understanding that inclusivity is something we should be working towards in Singapore, without judgement or assumptions.

– Ho Ning, LSA Awardee and PIAH Logistics Sub-Committee 2018





OBS is committed to maintain a focus on service in line with our motto. In doing so, we nurture our students to serve one another, the nation, as well as the community.

#### Project IsLand-A-Hand (PIAH)

PIAH is an annual event led by the OBS youth alumni, where volunteers from all walks of life come together to conserve and appreciate the natural environment. Launched in 2015, this is OBS' largest environmental service event. Since then, we have seen over 2,000 participants volunteer and make a difference.

#### **Journey Iridescence**

Developed in partnership with Rainbow Centre Margaret Drive School (RCMDS), Journey Iridescence aims to build a more inclusive society and empower students with disabilities to learn beyond the classroom. It also hopes to encourage participants to adopt an environmentally-friendly lifestyle.

Through an "Amazing Race", the activities conducted hope to boost the esteem of these students, cement family ties and impart new environmental skills and knowledge. Participants can also learn and gain further insight on environmental issues through various stations, such as having better appreciation of what nature can give, and learning the fundamentals of waste management.

#### Geocach'IN Ubin

Held in conjunction with Pesta Ubin, Geocach'IN Ubin seeks to promote awareness of our environment, and to imbue environmental consciousness. It also aims to achieve greater cultural awareness of Singapore through the sharing of Ubin's history. Boxes with information and activity stations were made available around the entire island for participants to find and learn information on the environment and heritage.

#### A FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE Tan Shi Yi LSA 2016 alumni and PIAH 2019 Committee member

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I had the chance to be part of the committee for PIAH in 2017, after attending the Leadership and Service Award (LSA) 21day in 2016. However, I felt like I didn't do enough back then. Hence, I volunteered to be in the organising committee in 2018 and took on the role of Programme Chairperson. For PIAH, it's not just the skills learnt, but the 6-month planning period that really shapes how you are as a person.

I am thankful to have learnt essential skills and interacted with social entrepreneurs who are environmental advocates. The planning period was tough as the entire committee comprised of volunteers who had to juggle different commitments, but the experience was made better through the friendships and bonds forged! I acquired project management skills, worked with people of various backgrounds, and guided my team to reach the end goal despite obstacles. This perspective, I find, applies to life and reminds us not to give up during tough times. Every little effort counts in saving the environment — so don't be afraid to take the first step!



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