

A few weeks back, I was invited to dine along with a few other of my classmates at HKU St John's High Table. The main theme of the dinner was sight, and during the dinner, some of us were given a pair of blindfolds and were asked to wear it for the duration of the dinner. It was a strange request; I've never done it before, and it sounded pretty odd. After all, how were you supposed to pick your food, much less know what you were getting without seeing the food? Despite the initial confusion, I decided to wear the blindfold. At first it was pretty amusing. The experience of blindness was new to me and I had no idea what to do. I found myself fumbling around with my chopsticks as I frantically tried to find the dishes. It was until I started to get hungry that I realized that this was going to be a challenge. I began adapting. I tried to visually map out the layout of the table and the location of the food in my head and proceeded to surgically pick out items on the table. There were a few problems with that. Firstly, the food was constantly moving; people were passing dishes around and the dishes were never in the right place. Secondly, as time went on, there was less food, which meant that it was much harder for me to pick up the food.

In the end, my classmates assisted me in helping me find the right dishes and I was able to resume eating. On one hand it was pretty nice. The feeling of companionship made me feel comfortable and welcomed, but at the same time, it made me feel a bit guilty. In a way, my selfish desire of wanting to try the experiment obstructed them from eating.

After a good 20 minutes, I took the blindfolds off. As my gradually came back, I felt a bit disorientated. I had a bit of a headache, but that the pain slowly dissipated as I caught the smell of food. After the dinner, the Headmaster invited one of the guests to give a speech to end the dinner. Turns out, the guest was blind. She was the CEO and creator of OCULUS, a non-profit organization that is devoted to helping the visually impaired and give them back their sight. Her speech was truly moving. During the long, heartfelt speech, she talked about her life story; how she lost her sight at young age, persevered, graduated from university with a Master's degree in psychology and went on to create OCULUS.

As I walked home, I began to reflect. Sight was something that I used to take for granted. I rarely indulged in the idea of being blind and never really knew how it felt like to be in that position. In that short time frame in which I lost my sight, I gained appreciation for my basic senses and now view the world in a different way. I pay much more attention to the small details in life – the bright rays of light that illuminate the sky, the thin layer of dust coated on the bus rails, the fluorescent green of life plants emit - I see it all. The fact that the images I see are nothing but a culmination of diffracted light that so perfectly strikes my eye never ceases to amaze me. Despite being relatively short, that dinner changed the way I now view the world. I'd like to thank St John's College for offering us such a wonderful experience and I look forward to studying there in the future!

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